

Saskatchewan's independent newsmagazine

PRIDE PATCH

Volume 28, Number 5

June 1999

\$3.00

Noam Chomsky on Yugoslavia

★ The CIA and Drugs
✧ The NDP vs Labour

SASKATOON CITIZENS FOR PEACE



Since the beginning of April, Saskatoon Citizens for Peace has organized a series of protests to voice opposition to the undeclared war on Yugoslavia. The broad-based coalition includes groups such as Veterans Against Nuclear Arms, Project Ploughshares, Peace and Development, and Citizens Concerned About Free Trade. For information on the next demo in Saskatoon, please phone 382-0021, 374-6023, 653-5636, or 244-5757.

ANTI-WAR DEMO

On Saturday June 5, the Regina Anti-War Coalition is sponsoring a major anti-war rally and march to coincide with an international march on the Pentagon. The rally will begin with speeches and songs at Victoria Park in downtown Regina at 1:30, followed by a march to Speaker's Corner near the Albert Street Bridge at 2:00. For more information call Norman at 522-4378 or Cathy at 347-7693.

SOLIDARITY



CEP Local 911 in Regina has moved more than \$425,000 worth of union investments from Scotia McLeod because the Bank of Nova Scotia is helping to finance a strike-breaking steel plant in Pueblo, Colorado. When Steel-

workers went on strike in 1997, the company, CF&I, brought in scabs to run the plant. When the workers offered to end the strike and go back to work, the company said no. So if you or your union have some money in the Bank of Nova Scotia or Scotia McLeod, you should consider following CEP Local 911's example.

SWEATSHOPS IN THE USA

More than a dozen U.S. retailers and manufacturers, including The Gap, Tommy Hilfiger, Sears and Wal-Mart, are being sued for more than \$1 billion for their connection with sweatshop conditions on the Pacific island of Saipan.

Because Saipan is part of the Northern Mariana Islands, which has U.S. Commonwealth status, clothes made on the island can be labelled "Made in the USA." U.S. overtime and other work regulations apply on the island, but U.S. minimum wage laws don't.

According to the *Multinational Monitor*, "The lawsuits recount how workers are recruited to Saipan - in exchange for jobs, workers agree to repay recruitment fees from \$2,000 to \$7,000, and often must sign 'shadow contracts' waiving basic human rights, including the freedom to date or marry. And they emphasize the poor working and living conditions for Saipan workers. The suits allege the workers work and live in crowded, unsanitary factories and shanty-like housing compounds that are in flagrant violation of federal law."



ART RAFFLE

Just a short reminder to those subscribers who have not yet returned your *Briarpatch* art raffle tickets. Please return them by June 30. That's the day we will draw for the ten prizes. Good luck to all and thanks for your participation and generosity.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Briarpatch magazine will hold its Annual General Meeting on Sunday June 27, 1999 at 11:00 am at SGEU, 1440 Broadway Avenue in Regina. If you wish to attend this year's meeting, please call the office at 525-2949 so we can make sure we order enough food.

Briarpatch is Saskatchewan's independent alternative newsmagazine committed to building a socialist democratic society. We provide an open forum for disadvantaged peoples and support progressive movements working to change unjust structures and build a genuine political and economic democracy. We support peace, equality, democracy, social justice, Aboriginal self-determination, and the protection of the environment. We oppose the oppression of people on the basis of nation, class, race, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

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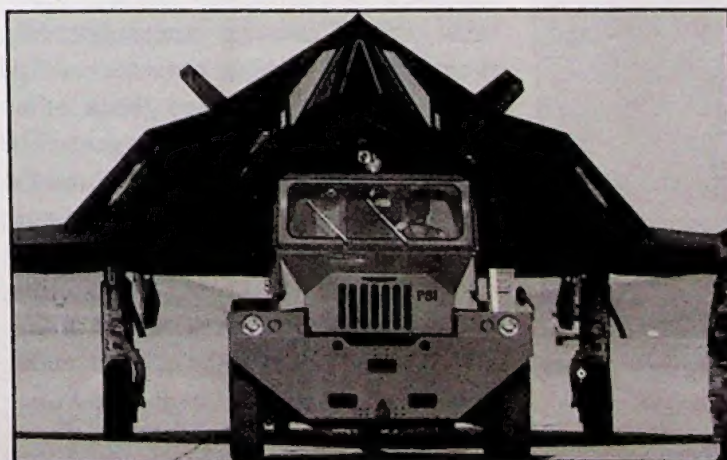
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COVER PHOTO

Elaine Brière

LETTERS**Dear Briarpatch,**

I have been hesitant to this point to get into a debate with my friend Victor Lau. But his latest letter to *Briarpatch* (May 1999), which followed an earlier lengthy letter in the *Leader-Post*, prompts me to write to find out "where he's coming from."

Victor and I share many of the same views, particularly our frustrations with the NDP. Without going into details, suffice it to say that the current Romanow crowd has virtually ripped the heart out of a once proud and principled people's party. The CCF/NDP is dead and in its place is just another mildly pink version of a capitalist party. In the upcoming provincial election, I expect I may not vote at all because I have no one to vote for! I have been a socialist all my life and while the previous CCF and NDP were never as left-wing as I would prefer, they represented enough good people and policies to make them much more preferable than the alternatives. Not any more.

Which brings me to the New Green Alliance (NGA) and, specifically, to Brother Lau. As someone who's been involved with party and union politics for about 40 years, I was reluctant to jump into this new organization right away. I adopted a "wait and see" attitude. I know this subjects me to criticism because any new group needs help in developing. But frankly, I'm "burned out" and also somewhat bitter. Time after time, supposedly progressive politicians have done a flip-flop and double-crossed those of us whom they promised to represent. The latest example is Judy Junor. (About the only exception to that "rule" in the past ten years or so was Bob Lyons.)

I'm now beginning to wonder whether our newest party will be different. To wit: while still the interim leader of the NGA, as well as being Vice-President of the Regina and District Labour Council, Victor jumped into an association with the Saskatchewan Taxpayers' Federation (STF). To my knowledge, Victor was not authorized by either the NGA or the RDLC to speak on their be-

half.

The STF does not represent workers or most ordinary taxpayers. It promotes a pro-business agenda, calling for cuts in taxes and services in order to "save" money. Two proposals they made were to cut the promotions budget of the Regina Transit System and eliminate the program which provides pickup and mulching of Christmas trees.

How can we get more people to leave their cars home and take less polluting, more environmentally friendly buses if we don't promote that alternative? The Christmas tree pickup is another environmentally positive program, which also provides jobs for some city workers.

I confess I'm a bit confused: does the NGA not have a strong ecological platform, and do they not also support workers and the union movement? It seems Brother Lau's involvement with the STF runs counter to these policies.

Finally - just to get all of my friends in the NGA mad at me - let me ask one final question: how did Victor Lau and a number of others become NGA "candidates" in their various constituencies? Old line parties have many faults, but at least they have nominating conventions where members get to vote for the person they want to represent them. Did the NGA regard this democratic process as irrelevant or unnecessary just because they are "new"?

I know this will likely be regarded by some as an attack on the NGA. That's not my intention. I like many of the policies they've revealed so far. If there is a suitable NGA candidate running in my constituency, I will probably vote for him or her. But some of the above mentioned actions make me nervous.

Victor quite correctly notes that more and more voters see the NDP as "saying one thing and doing another when elected." But is he not saying one thing, then doing another, even *before* he's elected?

Clare Powell
Regina, SK

Step by Step

Another arduous step in the battle for pay equity.

by Loretta Gerlach

On April 20, 1999 Justice Ross Wimmer upheld the right of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to initiate a complaint against Canada Safeway Ltd. The decision, labelled a victory by the Pay Equity Coalition of Saskatchewan, marks another arduous step in the battle for pay equity in Saskatchewan.

The complaint originated in September 1992 when Safeway cashier Barbara Nuttall (nee Hall) and her union, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, filed a formal complaint with the Human Rights Commission. The complaint was based on the comparison between the male-dominated position of food clerk and the female-dominated position of cashier. The cashiers were paid a considerably lower salary and provided less opportunity for advancement to full-time work. Nuttall felt cashiers had at least as much responsibility and value in the workplace. The Human Rights Commission certified the complaint as a class complaint, which was quickly appealed by Canada Safeway.

In May 1994, Justice Kyle of the Court of Queen's Bench in Regina ruled that the portion of the complaint alleging gender-based differences in pay rates could go forward as a class complaint, but the portion referring to opportunity for full-time work could not. Canada Safeway appealed the first ruling, while the Human Rights Commission cross-appealed the second.

The appeal and cross-appeal were heard by Justices Cameron, Lane and Jackson in November 1996. In August

1997, Justices Cameron and Lane ruled that neither complaint could continue as a class complaint unless it was also filed against the unions that were also

sion alleged that the work of cashiers and food clerks is of equal value and that the collective agreement which allows for the higher pay of food clerks is discriminatory. Therefore, the parties to the collective agreement are jointly responsible.

In January 1998 the RWDSU commended the Commission in taking this important step. In September 1998 both Canada Safeway and the UFCW challenged the Commission's right to launch such a complaint. The basis of Safeway's complaint was that while the Human Rights Code

does have jurisdiction over matters of gender, there is nothing in the Code on the issue of "pay equity." The UFCW's notice of motion suggested that this was a matter for the arbitration process as provided for in the collective bargaining process.

Justice Wimmer denied both complaints. He denied Safeway's motion, indicating that the initial judgement was "persuasive insofar as they approve a means for determining if a particular employer's pay practices offend gender discrimination prohibitions." The UFCW motion was denied based on the fact that complaints were not about "a dispute involving only the application, violation or interpretation of a collective agreement" and that the "essence of the complaint is discrimination on the basis of sex."

Safeway has indicated their plans to appeal.

Loretta Gerlach is the Coordinator for the Pay Equity Coalition of Saskatchewan.



Members of the Pay Equity Coalition of Saskatchewan in downtown Regina.

photo: George Manz

responsible for the collective bargaining process. Justice Jackson wrote a strong dissent, including her concern that the likelihood of women complaining to *both* their employers and their unions was slim, thereby negating the spirit and intent of the Human Rights Code to stop discriminatory behaviour.

In the summer of 1996, the Human Rights Commission identified the undervaluing of women's work in Saskatchewan as a serious problem and called on the provincial government to "demonstrate its commitment to the economic equality of women by immediately beginning the process of developing and implementing pay equity legislation."

In December 1997, the Human Rights Commission initiated a class complaint alleging that Canada Safeway, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) had discriminated against female cashiers at Safeway on the basis of their gender. The Commis-

Earthwalk

story & photo by Terry Wolfwood

I had just arrived in Victoria when I was asked in 1983 to co-chair the second annual PEACE WALK. It poured rain, unprotected sound systems couldn't be used, the route was changed at the last minute, and less than a thousand people attended.

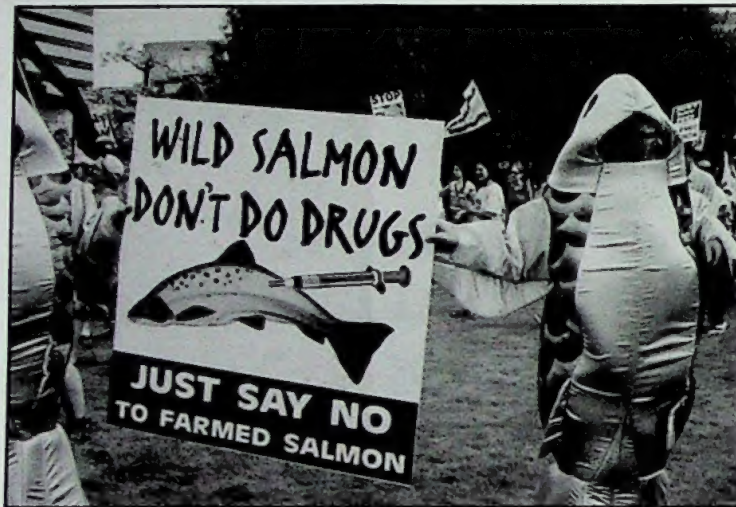
Not an auspicious day for an event that has become an enduring tradition for Victoria activists, believed to be the oldest continuing annual event of its kind in Canada.

I remember one of the 1983 speakers, Pauline Jewitt, MP, condemning Canada's role in the Cold War and calling for Canadian withdrawal from NATO. This year I thought of her as I watched 3,000 participants of the 18th annual WALK (renamed EARTH WALK in the nineties) arrive at the B.C. legislative grounds from City Hall. The largest contingent of walkers carried placards calling for Canada to get out of NATO's war against Yugoslavia. The Cold War seemed alive and well on this brilliant warm day under the cherry blossoms. We needed Pauline here - and in Ottawa.

At the Anti-War Coalition table, thousands of people signed petitions and postcards to Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy demanding an end to NATO bombing and calling for an international peace commission in the Balkans. We had a moment of silence for the victims of this latest violence of global militarism.

The WALK still has a peace emphasis. Speakers on peace issues, ranging from nuclear disarmament to an end to nuclear ships in our harbours and

waters, to closing the Nanoose Bay Testing Range, to support for Central American and East Timorese struggles for peace, the war on Iraq, arms sales



and military spending, violence in the media and entertainment, and the need for peace education have been part of the program.

Native people have called for justice for their people; we have been moved by their prayers, stories, songs and drumming. We have had children, teenagers and seniors speaking. Bishops and babies have had their turn at the mike. On one occasion, a visiting union activist from El Salvador was given the opportunity to speak about repression and violence in her country.

The WALK is sponsored by a broad alliance of citizen groups who turn up with colourful banners and dozens of information tables. Anti-war activists sit beside vegetarians, poverty groups rub elbows with those opposed to salmon farming, Jubilee 2000, calling for an end to Third World debt, sets up beside those calling for an end to NAFTA, bicycle transportation supporters and street people sit beside those who oppose aerial gypsy moth spraying.

Over the years many speakers have called on us to save our forests, our water and our air. This year we were told about the B.C. government's intention to sell Crown land to private owners. An anti-poverty activist decried the lack of human rights for the poor.

Last year one speaker came from the Victoria MAI-DAY Network to call us to stop the destruction of our democratic society by globalized corporate power. Another, from the Victoria Peace Centre, alerted us to the dangers of the Cassini space probe, carrying 72 pounds of plutonium. It is due to fly close to Earth this year.

The Victoria WALK is an occasion to reaffirm our commitments and to show our community our strength as we meet with friends to exchange news, actions and information. Solidarity and unity help us in our work for a better world for all.

Maybe in all this mingling and sharing of enthusiasm and knowledge, of the creativity of banners and displays, the energy of amazing musicians - from school choirs to African marimbas, Latin American rhythms to traditional folk singers, to rock and Celtic sounds, usually accompanied by hours of vigorous dancing near the stage - lies the story of a successful and enduring event that keeps hope and determination alive all year.

Terry Wolfwood works for the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation and has participated for 17 years as a worker, speaker, chairperson, artist and organizer for the WALK.

Swine Time

The Corporate Golden Piggy Awards are a snorting success.

by Cynthia L'Hirondelle

A swine time was had by 300-plus fans who filled the Roxy Theatre for the third annual Corporate Golden Piggy Awards held March 28 in Victoria, B.C. High-on-the-hog corporate contenders waited anxiously to see who would win a prestigious "Cochon d'Or" Award in one of the eight categories.

Competitors got down and dirty in the underwear competition for the Most Beautiful Pig Award. A muscular Mr. Monsanto (developer of Agent Orange and the terminator gene) stooped to pouring milk down his skimpy briefs while a pregnant smokin' Marlboro man from Philip Morris brandished his rifle at the photographer from the local newspaper (which printed no coverage of the event). Both competed against the corpulent Mr. Ethyl Corporation (who sued Canada and won \$19 million in order to allow them to put MMT into our gasoline). Mr. Monsanto emerged the winner when he unveiled his new all-udder cow.

Hollywood's Men in Black bravely exposed corporate mutant Sony/Viacom, owners of Odeon and Famous Players theatres, and winners of the Pink Slipper Award. These two companies locked-out B.C. projectionists when they refused to take a 60 per cent wage cut.

"Chip for Brains" winner was none other than Saviour Bill Gates of Microsoft. Wearing a sparkling halo and flowing robes, he warmly greeted the audience, "I think of all of you as my sheep." After quoting scripture, he

warned his followers: "Remember, it was the Apple that corrupted us!" Saviour Gates also unveiled his new eternal salvation software: "Messiah" and "World Domination 2000" (both in version 4.0). Unfortunately the rest of his message was lost when he suffered an acute "Blue Screen error" and had to be carried off-stage.

Lenin presented the Ugly Canadian Award to charming mining engineer Gerald Phillips, who is also known as "Little Hitler" by Westray miners. After Westray, Phillips went on to bulldoze a village in Honduras. Unfortunately, villager Wilmer Hernandez was in the way of "profit at any cost" and was crushed in the process. However he recovered enough from his injuries to present (with some help from a Westray mine widow), a lovely all-hemp noose which was placed around the neck of Mr. Phillips.

Before announcing the winner of the Caring for Profit Award, Nurse Ditsy and Doctor Titsy, a questionable pair of medics, cut into patient Joe Public, tore out Medicare's heart and replaced it with a multinational implant. Canadian company Apotex earned their golden pig in this category by suing a researcher who revealed

potential liver damage from one of Apotex's new drugs.

Other pig-toting titans included Matthew Barrett of the Bank of Montreal who enraged Miss Piggy by running away to the Cayman Islands with Kermit the Frog; Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. for recycling plutonium; and International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Silicone Creek Wobbly Firesquad and the Down But Not Out Chorus were two of the many musical acts which entertained between awards. The ever-glamorous Vanna Tripe served as snort prompter and Snort-O-Meter operator.

Though not nominated for an award, Coca-Cola also made an appearance on stage with their new singing, dancing Coke machines and announced plans to install Coke machines in preschools and maternity wards (with nipple-modified bottles).

A threatened disruption of the Corporate Golden Piggy Awards by the Society for the Liberation of Pigs (SLOP) did not happen as their chief organizer was teleported to Halifax.

Nominations for next year's awards may be sent to the Corporate Golden Pig Committee, #415-620 View St.,

Victoria, BC V8W 3C7; Fax (250) 361-3541; or e-mail taps@bc1.com by December 15, 1999. Want to have your own local Piggy Awards? Video tape and organizing kit may be requested from the above address for \$25 to cover costs and postage.

Cynthia L'Hirondelle is a writer and anti-poverty activist.



Sony/Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone being zapped by the swine-fighting men in black.
photo: Cathy Lewty

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Justice for Aboriginal people
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Bill Phipps

Canada's morality evangelist.

story & photo by Terry Wolfwood

When Bill Phipps, a baseball loving, baseball cap loving, straight, married, sixteenth generation Canadian, white, middle-aged man from, of all places, Calgary, was elected moderator of the United Church of Canada, some thought the UCC would get back to its safe, dull role of hatch, match and dispatch for Canada's largest Protestant denomination.

No way. Phipps and his many supporters believe the UCC needs to be led from the margins of our secular society to put the social gospel back in Canadian life. The mainstream media have highlighted his liberal interpretation of Christian doctrine, but Phipps' great passion is for an activist role for the church. Within the church he wants more emphasis on global social justice, Canada's indigenous peoples rights and gay rights. He also believes the church must show leadership in Canadian civil society.

He says Jesus calls us into the world to take on the market economy. Phipps condemned APEC as an alliance that supports poverty through low wages, sweatshops, and destroys human rights and the environment and gives sweeping powers to transnational corporations. He condemns agreements that weaken national and local democracy and calls for a world view based on human, not economic values.

The growing gap between rich and poor and our government's abdication



of responsibility to its citizens and its subservience to the corporate economy are major concerns. He says that many Canadians feel there is something terribly wrong with a society where the market-driven economy changes citizens into consumers and plunders the environment. Phipps calls the Reform Party, the governments of Alberta and Ontario, un-Canadian. He says their imported ideology of small government is contrary to Canadian governments' traditional role in creating and legislating social welfare, health and education policy.

One of Phipps' first acts as moderator was to initiate a national consultation on "The Moral Economy." Through discussion groups, electronic communication and meetings across Canada, citizens of all backgrounds

have responded in an outpouring of concern and information. Compiling all their contributions has become an enormous work with responses from many faith groups and citizens struggling to respect peace, justice and the integrity of creation in our market-driven world. Phipps hopes that this consultation will not only produce a set of economic justice policies for the church, but also a set of specific guidelines for Canadians to find alternatives to the global economy. He says, "a simplistic analysis of what is needed would be a transformation of heart and mind."

Phipps is on the road constantly speaking and meeting. He is strengthened by the support of his wife, author-artist Carolyn Pogue, in his high profile role. She says of his moral consistency, "that the man you hear in the pulpit is the same man I sit down to breakfast with." He admires his home congregation in Calgary that shares his concerns: middle class Canadians who organize actions including conferences on poverty, tutoring for immigrant children, outreach to the poor, sanctuary for refugees, and an Africa Day to fund self-help groups in Africa. He also gets strength from the older people of our society who helped create a nation of universal social programs, health care, and policies of equality. He says he is inspired by "those people who just keep on plugging away." Conservatives attack him for his outspoken anti-establishment

lishment views, but he recalls the 90-year-old man in Stettler, Alberta who, after a meeting about social justice said, "I have never been prouder of the United Church after decades of belonging to it."

The young who have a core of vision and energy to work for a better world also give Phipps hope. He calls Kevin Thomas, of the Friends of the Lubicon, a modern day saint who, with little more than a bicycle and a computer, organized a movement that forced the giant Daishowa corporation off Lubicon land.

Phipps sees part of his mission to bring the generations between the gray hairs and the nose rings - those between 30 and 60 - into activism for renewing the human values and ethics of universality and justice that were once so vital to public life. He calls on Canadians to speak out against privatization, the deficit myth and corporate power, and to save our institutions like the CBC, our health care and our welfare system, and to support a decent minimum wage. We must hold our governments responsible to citizens and our needs and not to give in to massive corporate power.

He urges all Canadians to get involved in community groups - labour, peace, faith or environmental organizations - to go where the energy is. Phipps is heartened by the groundswell of civil society in Canada and globally which is stopping the train of government sellout. He cites Jubilee 2000, the world movement to cancel Third World debt, whose activists formed an 80,000 person human chain around the meeting place of G-7 leaders in 1998 in Birmingham, England as a powerful sign that we can act globally as well as locally to build a world reality based on compassion and caring. He says we have to learn to ensure a decent life for all without destroying the environment.

Phipps sees signs of hope in our country when people decide to support public transportation, cooperatives and measures like organic farming, the bar-

ter system and other locally-based economies. He looks for more specific directions in the final outcome of "The Moral Economy" consultation.

Another source of inspiration for Phipps comes from the poorest of the poor. He recalls sitting in on a workshop in the Congo where women from central Africa were studying economic literacy. They were studying the International Monetary Fund as well as learning how to support their families with small businesses because the men were demoralized by unemployment caused by Structural Adjustment Programs.

Recently Phipps attracted controversy again when he called on rich and upper-middle class Canadians "to pay taxes joyfully." Phipps believes the privileged, like himself, must give back to society in order to support universal social values and to alleviate poverty.

He does respect those who withhold taxes from conscience - like those who resist paying for war. That is consistent with his statements against war. Phipps condemns the NATO war in Yugoslavia and says, "once again a

catastrophe has been allowed to develop without the international community having equipped itself to intervene in ways that make peacebuilding and conflict resolution possible."

A Catholic in Nova Scotia calls him "the man who shot the Easter Bunny," saying, the truth is never popular, but that the United Church now has a thinking person at the helm; she wished he were the Pope.

A Muslim admirer on Salt Spring Island, B.C. asked him, "where is the United Church leading us next?"

To answer that, Phipps refers to the power of "the reservoir in Canadians of compassion and justice" that can give real leadership to a society that needs to mend itself and to put morality into the centre of public life.

"We have to learn to take greater risks," he says as he calls for "a new, more broadly-based ecumenism that includes the whole inhabited earth."

Terry Wolfwood of the Barnard-Boecker Centre Foundation in Victoria, B.C. can be reached at Email: bbcfc@islandnet.com

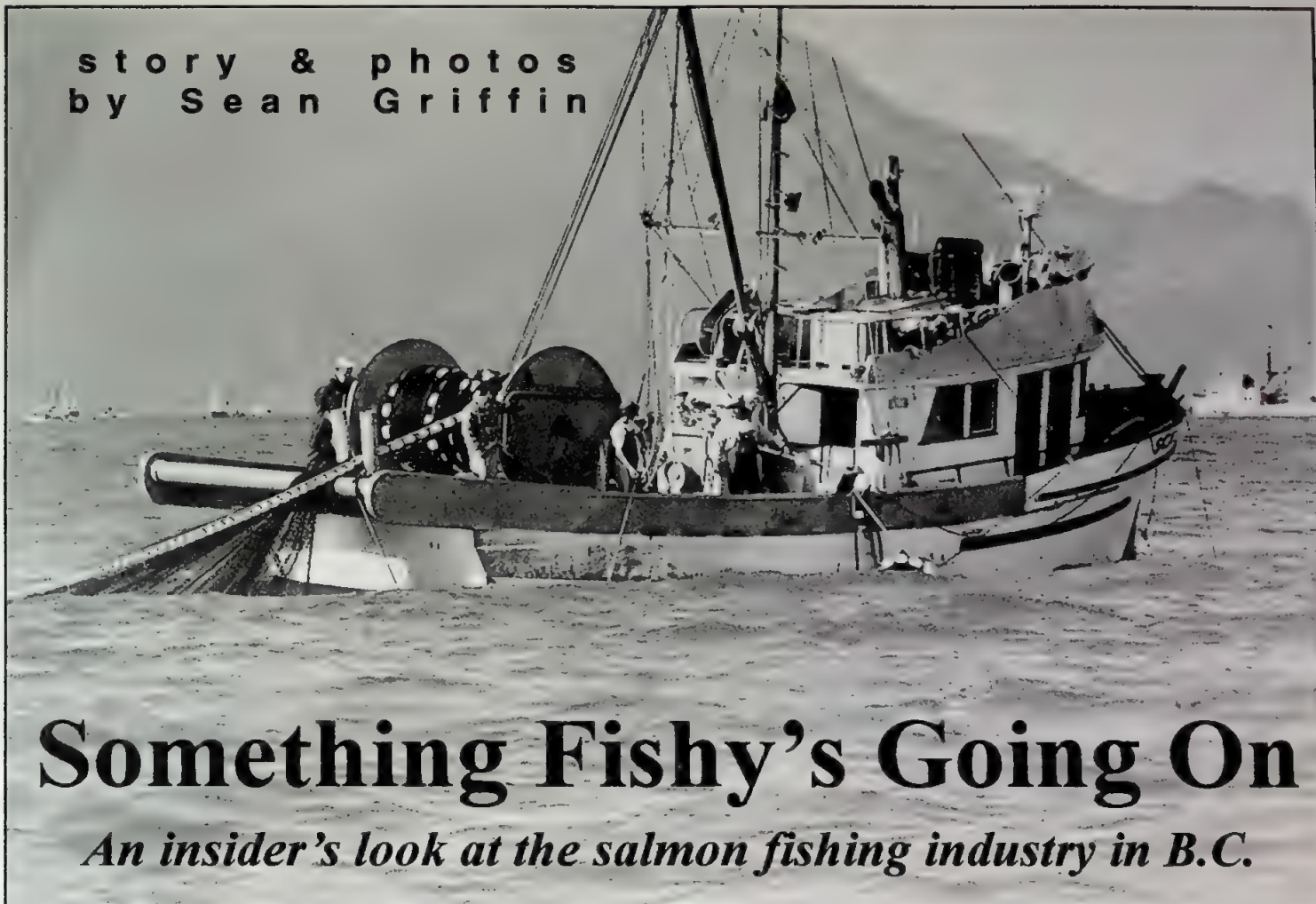


SGEU
Working Together For Saskatchewan

**Defending the right to free
collective bargaining.**

The Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

story & photos
by Sean Griffin



Something Fishy's Going On

An insider's look at the salmon fishing industry in B.C.

Crew aboard a seine boat begins pursing up the huge nets during an opening off the Central Coast.

Near-hurricane force winds and record rainfalls pounded the West Coast for weeks this winter as El Niño's unpredictable twin, La Niña, stormed across the Pacific weather system. But even La Niña's fury has been nothing compared to the upheaval in the B.C. salmon fishing industry caused by the man-made storm blowing from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) offices in Ottawa.

The latest gust came in April with the second round of the federal government's fishing vessel buyback program which saw another 647 salmon fishing vessel licences taken out of the fleet. Since 1996, when an earlier restructuring initiative was first launched, a total of 1,546 vessel licences — a total of 40 percent of the West Coast salmon fleet — have been bought back and retired.

What that percentage doesn't show is that over the last three years some 1,364 owner-operated gillnetters and trollers have left the fishery through the buyback, taking with them their purchases of fishing gear, fuel and groceries. The exodus from fishing communities on the North Coast and the Queen Charlotte Islands has already begun.

Ottawa insists it's a voluntary buyback in which fishermen wanting to get out of the fishery can offer their salmon licences for sale to the government. But for many fishermen and the communities they're leaving behind as they exit the industry, it's a decision they feel they had no choice in making. As has been the case so many times before, they say, they've been driven to it by government and the corporate sector making decisions from thousands of miles away.

Only a month earlier, in March, the largest fishing company on the coast, Weston-owned B.C. Packers Ltd., which had been closing plants and cutting costs at an accelerating pace over the past decade, announced it was selling its processing plants — including canneries in Alaska — as well as its fishing fleet to the second largest company, Pattison-owned Canadian Fishing Company. In January, B.C. Packers had already sold its venerable canned salmon labels, Clover Leaf and Paramount — both brand leaders in the domestic and export markets — to the New Jersey-based American food giant International Home Foods Inc, purveyors of Chef Boyardee products.

Nobody's certain what Canadian Fishing Company will



Fishermen burn their licence applications during the first major protest against the Mifflin Plan, held outside the DFO regional offices in Vancouver April 17, 1996.

do with its operations, or whose salmon will be selling on grocery shelves across Canada. But all along the coast, from Lax Kw'alaams, which clings to the Portland Inlet entrance to the Alaskan Panhandle, to the teeming river port at Steveston on the other U.S. border, fishing communities are reeling from the changes.

It was three years ago, following a sudden decline in the sockeye run to the Fraser River — the mainstay of the West salmon fishery — that newly-appointed federal Fisheries Minister Fred Mifflin, set off the first seismic shock on the coast with his Pacific Revitalization Strategy.

Quickly dubbed the "Mifflin Plan" by a coalition of groups that mobilized to oppose it, the DFO program divided the coast up into three areas for trollers and gillnetters and two areas for seiners. Where once all three fleets had fished the whole coast, following the runs from north to south, now they were confined to one area. In fact, most felt forced to buy additional licences, since it was virtually impossible to make a living in a single area.

Ironically, one objective of the Mifflin Plan was to improve fishermen's economic viability by reducing the fleet and thus improving catches for those remaining. Yet the costs of additional licences negated any benefits. The other objective was conservation — but no one at DFO would offer any estimate as to the actual reduction in catching capacity.

Mifflin was replaced following the 1996 election by Victoria MP David Anderson. By the following year, the new minister had announced his own restructuring program. This time it made no gesture towards revitalization — it was called simply the Pacific Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Program. The plan, which was to be carried out over roughly five years, included some funds for fisheries

rehabilitation and adjustment measures to move workers out of the industry, in addition to a three-round vessel buyback program.

Two rounds of the buyback have now been completed. The final round, scheduled to take place some time after the salmon season, will change the profile of the fleet even more — and will almost certainly hand greater control of the fishery over to the corporate sector.

That isn't the official story, of course. Anderson has played the conservation card far more skilfully than his predecessor, prefacing every policy announcement with his "conservation-first" message. He's been helped immensely by a "coho crisis" which has seen fishermen saddled with drastic fishing restrictions for the past two seasons to protect some endangered stocks of coho

salmon.

In a country still haunted by the spectre of the cod collapse in Newfoundland, the conservation message has a deep resonance. But in its quest to reduce government management costs and create market efficiencies, Ottawa risks heading down the same road as it did in Newfoundland.

Cutting the number of fishing vessels sounds good on a conservation agenda, but when the fleet reduction program pushes far more small, owner-operated fishboats out of the fleet and leaves the corporate-owned or controlled

A guide to the gears

Trollers: Owner-operated, with one or two deckhands, troll gear catches salmon with hooks, extended out on several lines from trolling poles. Usually work several kilometres from shore.

Gillnetters: Owner-operated, usually alone or with a deckhand, gillnetters work within a few kilometres of shore and run their nets out behind them like a curtain. The fish are gilled as they attempt to pass through and the nets are brought in regularly for "picking."

Seines: the largest vessels in the salmon fleet, are often company-owned or operated by the vessel owner, with a crew of five or six. The net is drawn in a huge circle around a school of fish and then pursed up to form an enclosed bag which contains the fish.

seine fleet largely intact — many of the seine vessels bought out have been older, less efficient vessels — the result is an industrial fishery in which the bulk of the catch is taken by the big boat fleet. That's the story of the fisheries collapse not just in Newfoundland but elsewhere in the world — and that's where the current plan is headed.

In fact, much of the driving force for restructuring is coming from the corporate sector in the processing industry, whose policy has been set in the aftermath of the 1989 decision by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which forced the federal government to abolish its export controls on unprocessed salmon and herring.

Arguing that they had to remain competitive with U.S. processors, the four major companies — B.C. Packers, Ocean Fisheries, Canadian Fishing Company and J.S. McMillan Fisheries — sought first to push wages and prices down to U.S. levels, sparking a bitter industry-wide strike that same year that only ended with the appointment of an industrial inquiry commission.

Since then, they've followed a two-fold strategy: beefing up their U.S. operations and rationalizing production in Canada. B.C. Packers led the trend with nearly a decade of closures that eliminated numerous fishing camps and processing operations, including the shutdown of its flagship Imperial cannery in Steveston — the very community where salmon canning had begun last century. At the same time, the company built a new cannery in Ketchikan, Alaska in a joint agreement with Canadian Fishing Company. The two companies rationalized their Canadian processing operations, creating a joint processing company in Canada, Allied Pacific Processors.

Since the costs of fish constitute the main component in processing operations, reducing those costs has always been of paramount importance in the boardroom, as years of strikes over minimum prices have demonstrated. But with fishermen already squeezed, the companies have increasingly looked to fleet reduction, seeing it as a way to increase production while keeping prices on a level with those in the high-volume Alaskan fisheries.

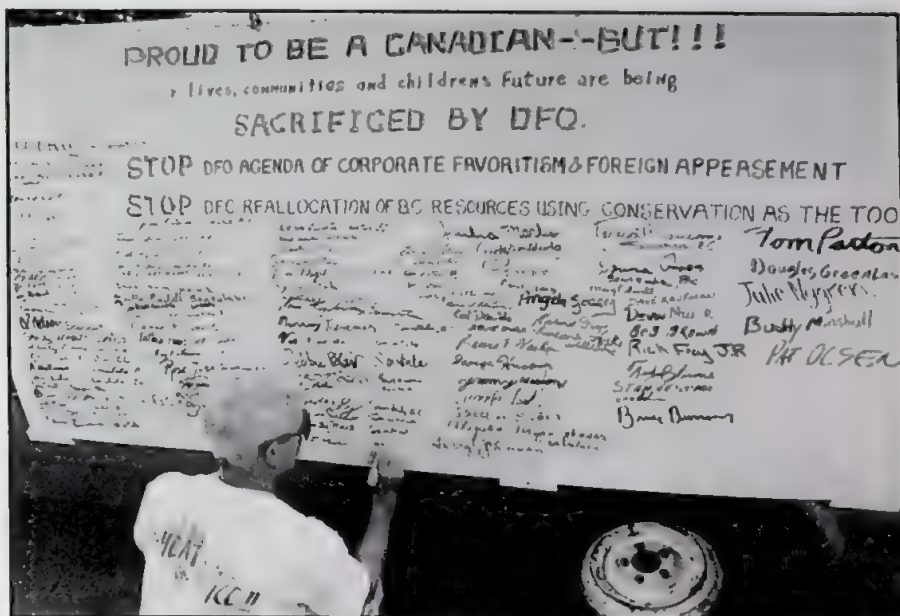
Mike Hunter, president of the Fisheries Council of B.C. (FCBC) which represents most of the major companies, put it on the table in an interview with the U.S. magazine *Pacific Fishing* in January, 1997: "Alaskan seine boats and gillnetters deliver five and ten times as much salmon as a B.C. unit. What you can't get in price you have to make in volume and that argues for a smaller more efficient fleet."

DFO has certainly delivered a smaller fleet following the first rounds of the buyback. And the companies' increasing grip is beginning to show.

In the first year after the initial Mifflin buyback, ac-

cording to Fisheries Council statistics, the FCBC companies were able to increase their share of salmon production from 63 percent before the Mifflin Plan to 67 percent.

Similarly, corporate concentration in the fleet has increased with each round of licence retirements. Although the seine fleet is the smallest in numbers, it harvests the most salmon, because of the sheer size and catching capacity of each vessel. Accordingly, most of the company ownership is focused in that fleet. When DFO crunched the



A Nanaimo fisherman adds his name to the message mounted on the side of a truck during a protest against the fisheries re-structuring plan in July 1998.

numbers following the latest buyback round, corporate ownership had moved up again — from 33 percent to 37.5 percent.

Even that number is based only on which companies holding ownership of a salmon fishing licence also hold a processing licence. "If the operations of tied fishermen are added in," said special fisheries commissioner Dr. Parzival Copes in a report prepared for the B.C. government last June, "it appears that about 60 percent of the seine fleet is owned or influenced by corporate interests." Undoubtedly even that number has gone up following Anderson's buyback.

The final, and possibly most decisive round of the buyback is scheduled to take place in the fall, at which time another crucial component of the companies' strategy will also be determined — the allocation of the catch.

When Fred Mifflin was implementing his buyback, he promised fishermen that as the fleet was reduced in each gear sector (gillnet, troll or seine), the remaining participants would benefit by having access to an increased share of fish. Now that commitment, too, is likely to be discarded at the companies' urging. The Fisheries Council was able to convince an arbitrator that the market should prevail and



the allocation should be "adjusted" from one gear sector to another as the fleet is reduced.

In other words, if the troll and gillnet fleets are reduced much more in percentage terms than the seine fleet — as most expect will happen in the final round — their share of salmon will shift to the seine sector. Not surprisingly, the FCBC has already proposed a formula to achieve just that outcome.

From an FCBC point of view, it makes sense: about three-quarters of all seine-caught fish is delivered to the Big Four companies (now the Big Three) while only about 30 percent of gillnet fish and a scant ten percent of troll-caught fish lands on their docks. Obviously the companies want to hold on to the seine fleet while letting the market take its relentless toll on the small boat fleet at a time when catches and incomes are down. The trouble is that public policy and fisheries management are derailed in the process.

The worst part of it is that the policy is being driven forward at a time when salmon runs, particularly the Fraser River sockeye runs, are in their low-cycle years. When they return to more normal levels, as they are forecast to do in 2001 and beyond, it will be too late — the changes to the fleet will already have taken place. Jimmy Pattison will have an even bigger piece of the salmon fishery, and conservation, far from being secure, will be in greater jeopardy.

"Everybody knows that when you go corporate and company-owned in a fishery, it's gone. It's over," says Chris Newton, a former DFO economist and a long-time statistician with the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome. It may be a dark view of the future but coming from someone with Newton's background, it certainly draws attention to the problem.

Still, none of the changes is taking place without opposition. The campaign against the Mifflin Plan brought together one of the broadest coalitions ever mobilized in the fishing industry and if it wasn't successful in heading off the plan, it did help focus an alternative vision for the fish-

ery.

Groups such as the Coastal Community Network, the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union, the Native Brotherhood as well as the national body representing fishermen — the Canadian Council of Professional Fish Harvesters — have called for various measures including licence banks to protect the small boat fleet and communities, professionalization programs to keep bona fide crews working on boats and independent marketing initiatives to get more value out of the fish and improve prices to fishermen. On the immediate issue, the UFAWU has called on Ottawa to put off the last round of buyback until there has been a full review of licensing policies, and to work with fishermen in developing a balanced fishing fleet that ensures conservation — and a future for communities.

Like most campaigns that challenge the market view of the world, it's an uphill battle. But looking beyond Ottawa's version of conservation is the first step.

A long-time labour editor and photographer, Sean Griffin is currently editor of The Fisherman, published in co-operation with the United Fishermen and Allied Workers' Union — CAW.



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DROP IN SOON!

BAD CONNECTION

An evaluation of the NDP-labour link.

by Larry Haiven

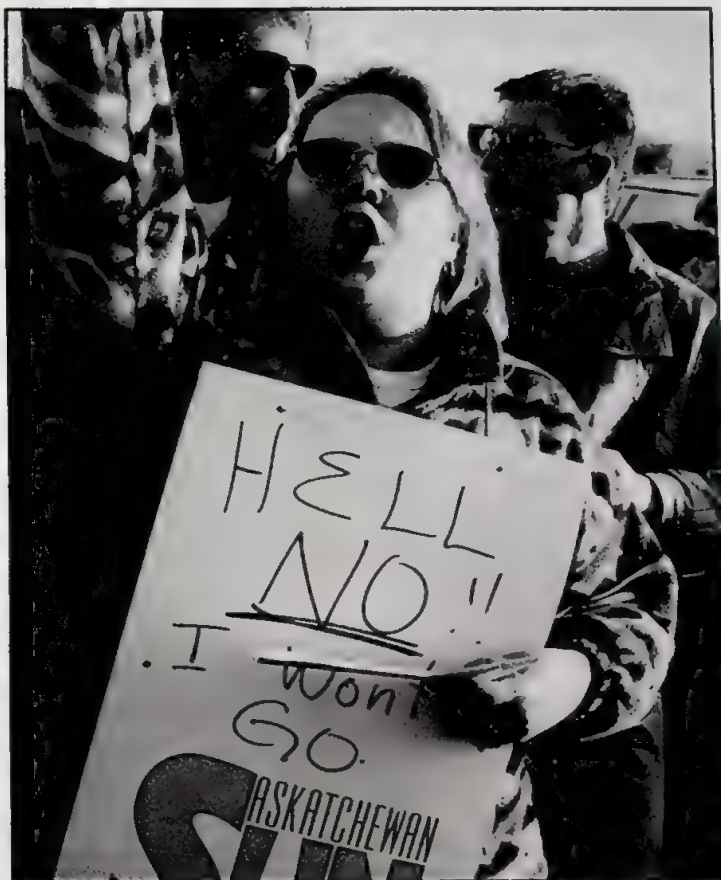


photo: Larry LeMoal, SUN.

Of course, the NDP has had an uneasy relationship with labour, especially when and where the party has formed a government. In the 1990s that relationship has shown almost impossible strain. A remedy some party leaders no doubt hoped to emulate was the Scandinavian model of corporatism, industrial peace, productivity growth and close relationship between party and labour. Yet confronted with the reality of Canada's labour movement, they were

The recent Saskatchewan nurses' dispute has laid bare the long-troubled relationship between the province's NDP government and the labour movement and thrown the very future of that relationship into crisis. Not only did the government make the strike illegal almost before it began, it did what few other governments in Canada and no previous NDP government had done - legislated the terms of settlement with no recourse to binding arbitration - an act in violation of international labour covenants. It had set a precedent with the SaskPower workers in the autumn. If anyone wondered how far Romanow would go in chastening labour, the premier echoed Trudeau's belligerence in deed if not word, "Just Watch Me."

The crisis did not result in a formal severing of the NDP-labour link (perhaps to Roy Romanow's disappointment). Saskatchewan labour is still too divided for that and does not wish to risk a full-scale Ontario-like split. But many on the left and among trade unionists, even constituency activists, will certainly refuse to work for the party in the next election, many will decline to vote or will vote for alternatives like the New Green Alliance. It is fair to predict that the link will never be the same.

inevitably disappointed, indeed angered, with its seemingly mindless adversarialism, defensiveness and conservatism.

They failed to appreciate that the Scandinavian model depended crucially on a strong labour movement, highly centralized collective bargaining, and a stable social democratic government, things quite lacking in Canada. Only such conditions could induce capital to recognize labour as a partner and labour to participate with confidence. Thus foremost among NDP policies would have to be a massive empowerment of the trade union movement and an ambitious broadening of the collective bargaining system.

These are the farthest things from the mind of the NDP. Indeed, in power it would not take long for party leaders to advocate a labour-bashing policy and even cutting the la-

bour tie completely. NDP governments have been quite schizophrenic in their labour policy. There remains a residual commitment to consensus building, collective bargaining and community and trade union participation. Thus NDP governments have been prepared to make extremely modest alternatives to collective bargaining, labour standards, occupational health and safety, and pay and employment equity (in comparison with the neo-liberal baseline). Amid the drive to control public spending, they have promoted consultation among labour and management, which more right-wing governments have not felt compelled to do. They have also rewarded wage restraint with limited employment security plans supplemented by labour adjustment and training agencies (though Saskatchewan has been the least adventurous in this regard).

But this very desire for peace has revealed the other, uglier face. NDP governments have easily grown impatient and petulant with the trade union movement when it refused to cooperate. Unlike other parties, which, from the start, see the labour movement as an alien camp, unreliable if not hostile, the NDP often purports to know better than labour what is in labour's best interests, even to the point of punishing labour "for its own good." With friends like these, the labour movement hardly needs enemies.

The circumstances in which the Romanow government came to power distinguish it from other NDP regimes. By 1991 the NDP was a government in waiting. With the Conservatives mired in scandal and debt, even the business community, at home and outside the province, was weary of the incumbents. This put the NDP in an enviable position. It owed nothing to any interest group or to labour or business. Moreover, the new government quickly and dramatically declared the treasury cupboard empty. Citizens girded themselves for years of blood, tears, toil and sweat. When some analysts, including one specially retained by the government employees' union, insisted that the government was exaggerating, their words fell upon deaf ears.

Compared to Ontario and B.C., capital has been very tolerant, if not supportive, of the Saskatchewan NDP. Perhaps the corruption of the previous government had been especially shocking and outrageous. Perhaps the Saskatchewan NDP was freer from obligations to labour and social groups. Perhaps the social democratic tradition in Saskatchewan was just too strong for capital to hope for anything better. Perhaps the NDP under Romanow could be relied upon more than any other party to make good the public debt. Perhaps too, the Saskatchewan NDP was the only one in the country to have more than superficial roots in the business community. Other provincial NDPs make attempts to court the business community to be sure, but in Saskatchewan, the connection is not just a show. The structure of the business community, with a few large multinationals and many small businesses, but virtually no medium-sized

firms outside Crown corporations and cooperatives (with close links to government) sets the province apart. Thus, a critical mass of employers hostile to the NDP is far from assured. Moreover, unlike anywhere else in Canada, the Saskatchewan social democrats can be said to be "the party of power" and it is simply not good politics for business to paint itself as irretrievably anti-NDP.

Thus the NDP government grew accustomed to acquiescence and became exceedingly arrogant in perceiving its adeptness to "handle" dissent. In so doing, it ignored lessons from across the country, especially with regard to nurses' strikes. After ten years of falling real wages and job losses, labour was growing restive. And when the government became the first in Canada to "turn the corner" on the deficit, when corporate and Crown profits burgeoned, when CEOs' pay blossomed, workers, especially skilled workers, especially in the public sector, determined to try to catch up. First power workers, then nurses, led the way. While the public may not have identified strongly with the former, the latter plumbed deep popular insecurity about the future of the health care system and Medicare. Unlike any other group, nurses have been able to successfully wrestle with governments over stewardship of the public interest.

The ensuing crisis ranks in seriousness with the 1982 clash wherein the Blakeney government ended a strike by CUPE hospital workers. Soon afterward, the NDP government went down to ignominious defeat, and there is no doubt that labour's wrath played a part. With the far right still discredited and a weak Liberal Party, history will probably not repeat itself exactly this time. The labour movement has nowhere else to go right now. But the multiple insults and injuries inflicted by the government cannot and will not be ignored or forgotten. While Romanow and his followers may have their own reasons for wishing to sunder the labour link, the labour movement itself is reconsidering whether the link serves the interests of Canadian workers.

Larry Haiven is a Saskatoon social activist and teaches industrial relations at the University of Saskatchewan.



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How has the Saskatchewan NDP government's decision to legislate nurses back to work affected the relationship between the labour movement and the NDP?

Ten prominent trade union leaders speak out.



Barb Byers
President
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour



Tom Graham
President
Canadian Union of Public Employees Saskatchewan

SPEAKING OUT

There has been speculation recently regarding the Romanow government's mishandling of healthcare negotiations and the nurses' strike. Will this lead to a split between the labour movement and the NDP?

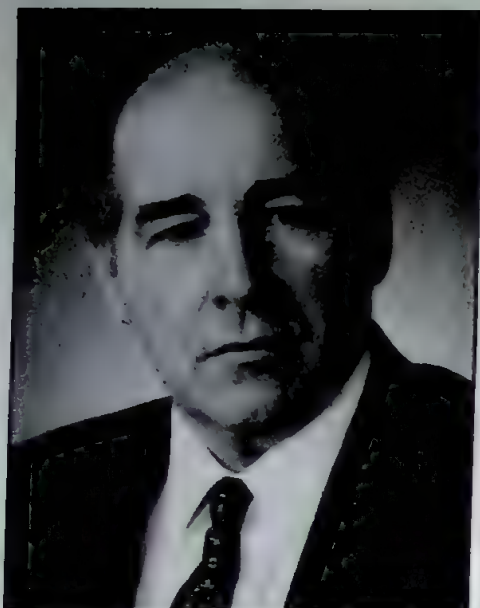
There's some historical and current realities we all need to consider. The most significant reality is that unions have historically not had a unified position on the question of affiliation to the NDP. There is a section of unions affiliated to the SFL that hold the position of "my party right or wrong"; that no matter what the NDP does to attack workers (or doesn't do to support them), they are better than the alternatives. There is another group of unions that promote selective support for individual NDP candidates who have shown they support workers and the people's movement. The third group of unions have policies which direct that, as a union, they should not affiliate to any political party. They do encourage their members to participate in the electoral process as individuals. The final and smallest group of unions do not take any position on the question of partisan politics. These four groupings of unions have held the same positions for more than 20 years and they are unlikely to shift their positions. There have been no recent Saskatchewan studies to assess if there is any significant impact on union members' voting patterns as determined by the formal position of their union.

The most significant change since 1982, when the NDP ordered CUPE hospital workers back to work, is that the leadership of the SFL at the time told the NDP government that they wished they wouldn't order the CUPE members back, but that it shouldn't affect the election results, since workers had "nowhere else to go." We all know what happened and that many people, including workers from all unions, found another place to mark their "x" on the election ballot.

In 1999, when the NDP ordered the nurses back to work, the leadership of both the SFL and the CLC and most of their affiliates told the NDP that they were acting against both workers and the Party, and that union members would consider those actions when they went to mark their "x." The labour movement put workers first in their support of the nurses.

For all unions, our best strategy would be to build strong programs to support collective bargaining, the right to strike, and workers who are taking on the boss and the corporate agenda. This could provide the best support to all unions and could ensure that the NDP as a government would have to keep workers' interests ahead of their corporate agenda.

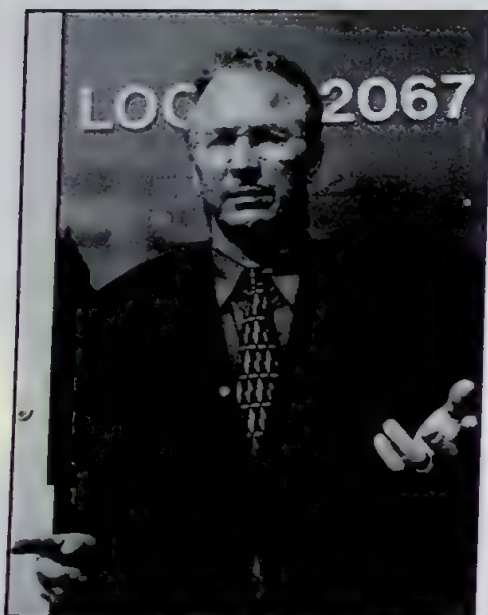
When Roy Romanow and his government announced the legislation forcing the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses back to work with an imposed settlement, he also announced that the present NDP government no longer supported free collective bargaining. Mr. Romanow must understand that to continue down the slippery slope to the right will eventually lead to the demise of what was once a progressive party that put people first. Those in the "do more with less" bottom line crowd will cast him and the NDP aside at the first opportunity.



Rick Byrne
Regional Director
Canadian Labour Congress Prairie Region

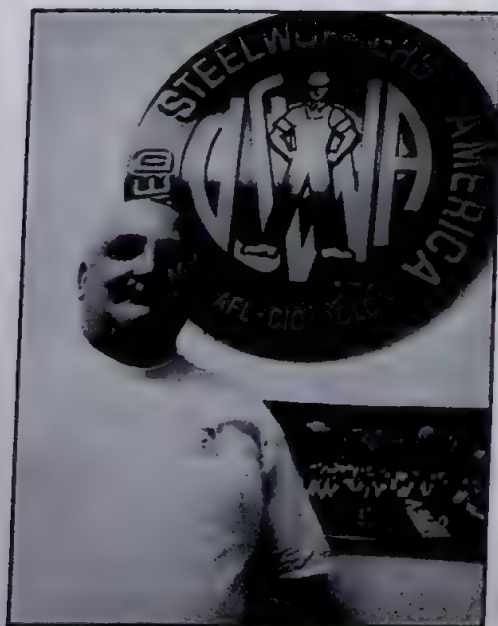
Back to work legislation and imposed collective agreements are wrong and should not be tolerated by the union leadership in this province. If the question is "has this most recent move by the provincial government strained the relationship between labour and the NDP," I think the answer is obvious. Union leaders should and do recognize that their objective in life has to be proper representation of their members, therefore anything that interferes with that should be a concern. My personal view is that the back to work legislation and imposed agreements give us a signal that political activity goes much broader than the ballot box. Regardless of which political party is in power, workers must be vigilant in protecting their rights and their leaders must be prepared to lead them in that direction.

Gord Gunoff
Business Manager & Financial Secretary
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2067



Recently, in a *Leader-Star* news article, Premier Roy Romanow said he is not particularly concerned about organized labour withdrawing their support from the provincial NDP. In fact Romanow said he would welcome a decision by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour to cancel its official endorsement for the NDP. Interesting comments from a Premier who, when in opposition, repeatedly stated that he would uphold the rights of working people. Maybe it's time that organized labour cut its ties with the NDP and support labour candidates running for office in any and all parties. These candidates must stand and be counted on moral issues as well as legalities under provincial and international law on the right to free collective bargaining. Romanow has broken international law on the freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively in the United Nations' covenant on social, cultural and economic rights, which all provinces, including Saskatchewan, had to agree specifically before Canada could be bound by the terms of that document. Legally, in Saskatchewan, he may be right, but internationally he has broken the law and proven his lack of statesmanship. This is a black day for Saskatchewan and a black mark for the Premier of this province.

Joe Nistor
President United Steelworkers of America Local 5917
USWA Vice President of the SFL
Labour Vice President of the NDP



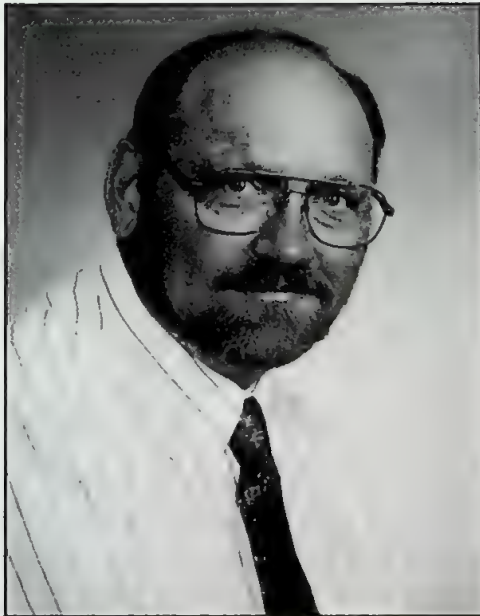
The possible results of a June election in Saskatchewan could be frightening. The impact of the current labour unrest between SUN and the government could be disastrous for an NDP government seeking a third term. I in no way condone what our government has done on more than this one occasion to members of the labour movement, but I know that sending the government a message by not voting at all or voting for another party is not an option. A change in government will not change what has happened in these cases. Our only means of correcting these problems is by electing a government that is capable of doing so. This has to be an NDP government.



Rosalee Longmoore
President
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses

The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses has never supported a political party. In fact, members were very cautious about affiliation with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress for that very reason. Funds from our union are not directed to a political party.

Recent events surrounding our collective bargaining have changed many nurses, their families and their friends. They have become more politically active than ever before in our history. They have lobbied MLAs, called radio phone-in shows, and been interviewed by the media to ensure their views were known. This new found strength and determination will not go away quickly. Nurses will run as candidates in the next provincial election, others will work on campaigns, and still others will make sure they are at all-candidates meetings and will want to know details of the health and the labour platform of every candidate. I think it will be a very interesting election!



Doug Blanc
President
Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

When the government legislated SUN back to work and imposed the 2-2-2 settlement six hours into the strike, it sent a message to trade unionists across the province: If you don't play by our rules, your right to bargain a collective agreement can be revoked in a matter of hours.

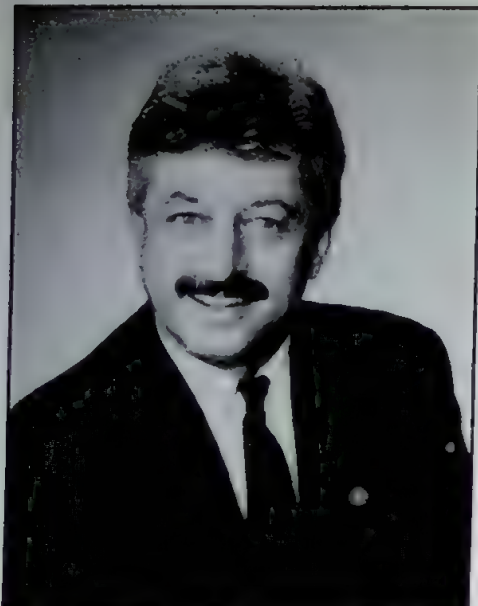
Two SGEU health care bargaining units were at the table when SUN was ordered back. The legislation had an impact on the atmosphere of the negotiations. On the one hand, SAHO representatives came in with the attitude that they were in the driver's seat. On the other, the SGEU negotiating committees were determined that the threat of legislation was not going to tie their hands. In the end, both units resorted to strike action because there was no positive movement at the table.

For SGEU as a whole, the actions of the government are disturbing. As a union that bargains with government as our employer, this move tells us that our ability to bargain in good faith is in jeopardy; that fundamental trade union rights can be stripped away in a matter of hours by the politicians of the day.



Keith Jeworski
President
Canadian Union of Postal Workers Regina Local

The Romanow government richly deserves to be thrown out of office for their anti-labour actions in recent months: first against SaskPower workers and then the nurses. Party loyalists will no doubt try to persuade workers to hold their nose and vote NDP, pointing out that the Saskatchewan Party and the Liberals are as reactionary, or on other issues, more reactionary than the NDP government. Some will accept the "lesser evil" argument, while others will simply not vote at all. Another option worth consideration by trade unionists is to support New Green Alliance candidates in the next election.



Hugh Wagner
General Secretary
Grain Services Union

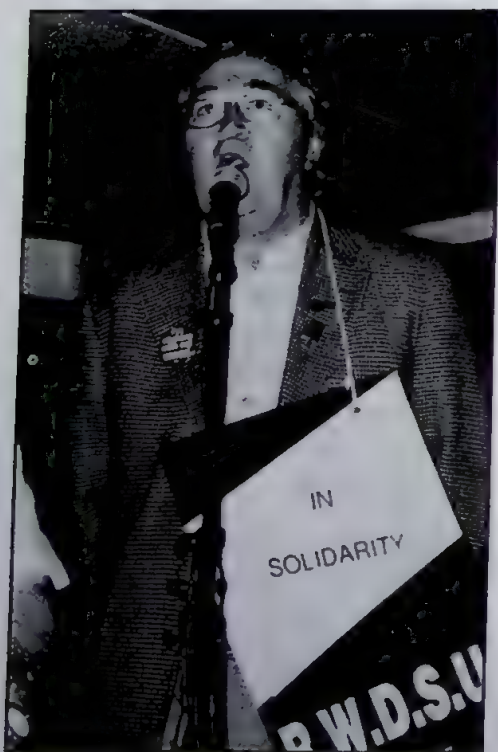
Bill 23, introduced and passed by the Romanow government on April 8, purported to eliminate the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses' right to strike. Instead, the Bill incited nurses to assert their rights.

The ensuing struggle laid bare the anti-union nature of the Romanow government. It also electrified the labour movement in Saskatchewan and revived debate about the relationship between trade unions and the NDP.

The NDP under Roy Romanow is not, and has never been, the party of labour. The official relationship between trade union institutions and the party masks the chasm of political interests dividing both participants in the uneasy marriage. Why would labour continue to support a government evidently bereft of a progressive mission? Mr. Romanow's repeated denigration of the labour movement as a special interest group and his veto of any substantial labour law reform were important precursors to the authoritarian attack on labour rights that came in response to SaskPower workers and now the nurses.

The tilt of the NDP nationally is being shifted towards the right as a result of influence by Saskatchewan operatives close to Mr. Romanow. Within the province, he has mused about ending the relationship with labour. It is time for the labour movement to come to grips with the limitations placed on our ability to effectively represent the working class as long as we officially endorse a party in government that long ago abandoned any left-wing social democratic policies. There are those of us who argue that the NDP is simply fulfilling the natural role of social democratic parties as they have functioned throughout their relatively short history.

It is likely labour votes will continue to go to NDP candidates at election time, but more by default than by conviction.



Chris Banting
Secretary Treasurer
Sask. Joint Board
Retail, Wholesale and
Department Store Union

The majority of working people in Saskatchewan feel betrayed by the Romanow New Democrats. Following its 1991 victory, the NDP government conveyed a bleak message that the province was on the verge of bankruptcy. Meaningful improvements to medicare, education, labour legislation and social programs would have to wait until times were better. The same approach was used for its 1995 re-election and this time the NDP came to power with the smallest voter turnout in this province's history. It won't work in the next election and save for the fact the majority of voters believe the opposition parties to be worse, they probably wouldn't win. In all likelihood we should expect an even lower turnout at the polls if trade unionists boycott the election as many have threatened to do.

The final straw for most was the introduction of Bill 23 forcing the nurses back to work. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to convince trade unionists that the NDP is a supporter of free collective bargaining. Outlawing the right to strike through this back-to-work legislation offended basic human rights and was the repugnant act of a premier who has lost touch with his constituents. The nurses' strike was not simply a labour-management dispute. The overwhelming community support garnered by nurses during the strike indicates discontent with the government's handling of medicare specifically and a range of other social issues in general.

Roy Romanow has publicly speculated the NDP should sever its ties with the trade union movement. Little does he know there are now many trade unionists who agree with him. The irony is that even at its most recent convention, New Democrats endorsed resolutions calling on the province to legislate programs dealing with most of the major criticisms leveled at to his government. He did not listen then and he is not listening now.

Noam Chomsky

ON THE WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA

An interview by Mary Lou Findlay with Noam Chomsky on As It Happens, CBC Radio, April 16, 1999.

Mary Lou Findlay: Do you think that, by and large, you and we are getting a reasonably accurate picture of what is going on in this war?

Noam Chomsky: I think the reporters on the ground, many of them, are producing quite accurate stories; their framework and interpretation is another question. I mean inaccurate isn't the word for it, it is ludicrous.

Mary Lou Findlay: Well, tell us about that.

Noam Chomsky: This is presented, I haven't read the Canadian media, but in the United States and what I've seen of Europe, it's presented as a humanitarian endeavour, and that is repeated over and over. Well, if anything is obvious, it's the opposite, it cannot possibly be considered as having humanitarian motives by a rational person.

Mary Lou Findlay: You don't believe that the reason for the NATO action was to rescue the Kosovo Albanians from oppression?

Noam Chomsky: It is virtually inconceivable on rational grounds and there are simple reasons for that. One reason is simply Kosovo itself. Up until the U.S.-NATO bombing on March 24, there had been, according to NATO, 2,000 people killed on all sides, and a couple of hundred thousand refugees. Well, that's bad, that's a humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately it's the kind you can find all over the world. For



example, it happens to be almost identical in numbers to what the State Department describes as the last year in Colombia: 300,000 refugees, two or three thousand people killed, overwhelmingly by the military forces and their paramilitary associates, who the U.S. arms, in fact arms sales are going up. That's the way the U.S., Britain and other countries act when there are humanitarian crises, namely they escalate them. Now, what happened in Kosovo, is in fact the same thing.

There were options on March 23. They chose an option which, predictably, changed the situation from a Colombia-style crisis to maybe approaching a disaster, and that was a conscious choice. The effects? Let me quote the U.S.-NATO commanding General, Wesley Clark: two days after the bombing he said it was "entirely predictable" that the reaction of the Serb army on the ground would be exactly as it was.

Mary Lou Findlay: I must interject here and say that our own Foreign Minister has said nobody foresaw the scale of Milosevic's response.

Noam Chomsky: That's ridiculous, maybe they didn't foresee the exact scale, but when you bomb people they don't throw flowers at you. They react.

Mary Lou Findlay: Let me ask you what you think the motive was then.

Noam Chomsky: One thing is that any kind of turbulence in the Balkans is what's called in technical terms a crisis; that means it can harm the interests of rich and powerful people. So if people are slaughtering each other in Sierra Leone, Colombia, Turkey or where ever, that doesn't affect rich and powerful people very much. Therefore they are glad either to just watch it, or even contribute to it, massively as in the case of Turkey or Colombia. But in the Balkans it's different; it can affect European interests and therefore U.S. interests, so it becomes a crisis. Then you want to quiet it down. How do you do it? The U.S. flatly refuses to allow the institutions of international order to be involved, so no UN, and that's pretty explicit. So they have to turn to NATO, which the U.S. dominates, which turns to force. So, why force? Well, several reasons, and here I think Clinton, Blair and others have been pretty honest about it. The point that they reiterate over and over is that it is necessary to establish the credibility of NATO. Now all we have to do is translate from Newspeak, what does the credibility of NATO mean? Are they concerned with the credibility of Italy, or the credibility of Belgium? Obviously not. They are concerned with the credibility of the United States. Now what does the credibility of the United States mean? Ask any Mafia don, he'll explain it. So, suppose some Mafia don is running some area in Chicago, what does he mean by credibility? He means that you have got to show people that they better be obedient or else. That's credibility.



Mary Lou Findlay: Go back to the United Nations for a moment, and if I may bring up the Canadian arguments again, because Canada has long been a supporter of UN, of international law, in every instance I can think of except this one. The argument our Foreign Minister and our Prime Minister give now, and in fact all of Parliament, is that the UN is now a helpless organization, it could do nothing to prevent slaughters and massacres, therefore we had to do something, and, there is the UN Human Rights Declaration that gave them authorization.

Noam Chomsky: Well, the UN Human Rights Declaration gives no authorization. It is perfectly true that there is a tension between the UN Charter which bars the use of a threat or the use of force, and the Universal Declaration which guarantees, theoretically, the rights of people against oppressive states. But Canada doesn't care at all about that. Canada has a horrible record in that respect. For example, take Suharto's Indonesia, which is a brutal, murderous state. I think Canada was supporting it all the way through because Canada was making money out of it. And we can go around the world, Canada strongly supported the U.S. invasion of South Vietnam, the whole of Indochina. In fact, Canada became the largest per capita war exporter, trying to make as much money as it could from the murder of people in Indochina. In fact, I'd suggest that you look back at that comment by a well known and respected Canadian diplomat, I think his name was John Hughes, some years ago, who defined what he called the Canadian idea, namely "we uphold our principles but we find a way around them." Well, that's pretty accurate, and Canada is not unique in this respect, maybe a little more hypocritical.

Mary Lou Findlay: Has this military action done any harm to the United Nations, and the advancement of international law, or was it already a moot point?

Noam Chomsky: Of course it has. You could argue that since the United States, the leading power in the world, has brazen contempt for international law, it doesn't mean much, but there is no doubt that this act is another blow against a rather fragile system of world order. But that's the least of it. I mean it has been of extreme harm to the people of Kosovo, that is obvious. It has undermined, and maybe permanently destroyed, a courageous and promising democratic movement in Belgrade, which was the best hope of getting rid of Milosevic. And it has caused considerable disruption and danger in surrounding areas, including Montenegro and Macedonia, and may spread.

Mary Lou Findlay: Let me ask you a question about our perceptions, rhetoric and manipulation then, because our opinion polls right now tell us that the majority of Americans and Canadians support this action and as far as I can

tell they are doing it because they believe it is the right thing to do, that it was the humanitarian thing to do, that they are saving people.

Noam Chomsky: That's right, if you are told over and over again, morning and night, with close to 100 percent unanimity, thundering at you "we are doing this to save lives" you might tend to believe these absurd claims, although you know a moment's reflection should demonstrate their absurdity.

Mary Lou Findlay: Do you think people are also affected by interviews with refugees, including people who were supposedly bombed by NATO by mistake, who say, well it was a tragedy of course but we don't care, tell NATO to keep on, we are with NATO, NATO's doing the right thing.

Noam Chomsky: There are many people around the world who think you ought to bomb Washington.

Mary Lou Findlay: But these are the victims who are saying carry on.

Noam Chomsky: Sure, the victims say it. I mean the victims in Turkey would be delighted if the U.S. would stop arming the Turkish government and would bomb Ankara.

Mary Lou Findlay: But they have lost, as you just said. They are all refugees now and they are still saying it is the right thing to do.

Noam Chomsky: When you are a refugee, what you hate is the person who drove you out with a gun. Look, if people sitting in Toronto can't think through the fact that the U.S., Canadian and British actions escalated the atrocities, predictably, if they can't think through it, how do you expect a refugee on the ground to think about it.

Mary Lou Findlay: There isn't unanimity in Congress about this. There is near unanimity in the Canadian Parliament. If what you are saying is correct, how is it that everyone is so misled, so woolly-headed about this?

Noam Chomsky: Not misled. I think the facts that I just described are quite plain. Why are they misled? For one thing, because we live in highly indoctrinated societies, with an intellectual class that is extremely subordinate to power, and since they are totally bombarded with propaganda about how it's not our fault if the consequence of actions is an escalation of atrocities, they don't think about it.

Mary Lou Findlay: Would you have done anything, or



photo: Elaine Brière

what would you have done?
Noam Chomsky: On March 23? Well, there were three choices. One was to act in such a way as to escalate the atrocities, that's the one that was chosen. A second choice was to do nothing. A third choice was to act to mitigate the atrocities. Now if you can't think of any way to mitigate atrocities, the best choice was to do nothing. Now, was there any way to mitigate the atrocities? Well, I suppose there were diplomatic options that were open. The Serbian Parliament passed a resolution on March 23, the day before the

bombing, in which it said that they would not accept a NATO force, (hardly surprising, Canada wouldn't accept a Warsaw Pact force), but they proposed that there be a move toward autonomy for Kosovo. After that, there should be an international force. Well, is that an acceptable offer? We don't know, because the U.S. wouldn't even pay attention to it. But pursuing that offer, through the mechanisms of world order such as the UN Security Council or neutral countries like India or others, pursuing that would certainly have been better than doing nothing and vastly better than acting to escalate the atrocities.

Mary Lou Findlay: What do we do now?

Noam Chomsky: If a doctor is giving you medicine which is killing you, the first thing we would do is stop giving you the medicine, not give more of it. So the first thing we ought to do is stop doing what is harming the situation. The second thing we should do is hand over diplomacy and negotiations to some credible source. So hand it over to the Security Council, to neutral countries, maybe India, South Africa, Scandinavian countries. Anyone who hasn't completely discredited themselves, have them undertake diplomatic initiatives, and see if there is a way to resolve the distinction between, for example, the Serbian Parliament proposal and the NATO proposal.

Mary Lou Findlay: Are we likely to do any of that?

Noam Chomsky: The U.S. and Canada? Very unlikely, because these are jingoist countries, which are highly subordinate to power and where people don't stop to think through the consequences of what they are doing, unfortunately.

8 Myths

The NATO war in Yugoslavia.

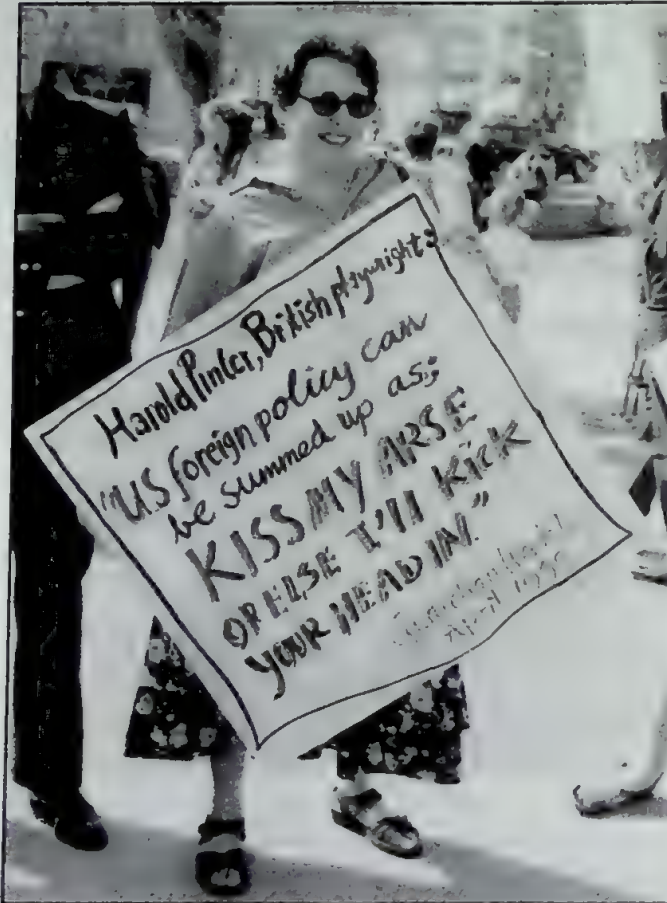
by the International Action Center

Myth #1.

NATO had to attack the Serbs because the Yugoslav government and President Slobodan Milosevic refused to negotiate on Kosovo, a region of Yugoslavia where ethnic Albanians are the majority.

Reality: NATO bombs are falling on all Yugoslavs: Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Hungarians, Romanis (called Gypsies) and other people who make up the multi-ethnic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There were no "negotiations." U.S. officials like Secretary of State Madeleine Albright went out of their way to make this point when "peace talks" were held in France in February. Instead, the U.S. government presented an ultimatum to the Yugoslav government that had three points: 1) Kosovo must be granted autonomy; 2) NATO must be allowed to station 30,000 ground troops in Yugoslavia to ensure this autonomy; and 3) a NATO-conducted referendum for Kosovo's independence from Yugoslavia would take place within three years.

The Yugoslav government agreed to the first condition, and rejected the second and third, saying they were a gross violation of their sovereignty and the independence of their country. The one breaking point that Yugoslavia refused to negotiate is that they will not allow a foreign occupying army. The only constant U.S. demand was that NATO troops must be based in Yugoslav territory. The U.S. refused to allow the Yugoslav delegation to meet with the Albanian delegation, or even to see 56 pages of the 80-page agreement.



Myth #2.

Yugoslavia is the aggressor in this conflict and Milosevic is a "new Hitler."

Reality: No Yugoslav soldiers, planes or ships are attacking another country. The conflict in Kosovo is an internal issue. Yugoslavia is a small developing country of 11 million people, being attacked by 19 countries, including the biggest military powers in the world, which have a combined population of more than half a billion people. Milosevic has been demonized much like Saddam Hussein was during the war against Iraq. In an interview in the *San Francisco Chronicle*,

a U.S. State Department official admitted: "The demonization of Milosevic is necessary to maintain the air attacks."

Myth #3.

Clinton, Albright and the Pentagon generals were moved to action by their concerns about "ethnic cleansing" and human suffering.

Reality: The U.S., Germany and other NATO powers played a key role in breaking up Yugoslavia in 1991-92, arming and supporting secessionist movements. It was the International Monetary Fund that demanded an end to "special privileges" for Kosovo in the 1980s. For 45 years after World War II, the many nationalities that made up Yugoslavia lived together in peace. In the civil wars, which followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, there was much blood-

shed and human rights violations on all sides. The biggest single act of "ethnic cleansing" was the forced removal of 600,000 Serbs from the Krajina region of the former Yugoslav Republic of Croatia by the U.S.-trained and armed Croatian military in 1995. More than 55,000 of these Serbs, who were resettled in Kosovo, are among the hundreds of thousands of people made refugees by NATO bombing and the conflict in Kosovo. The U.S. "concern" about removal of people from their homeland is very selective. This is not surprising: Virtually the entire continent of North America was "ethnically cleansed" of Native people to make way for the U.S. and Canada, two NATO powers. U.S. policy has supported, with arms and money, the removal of Kurdish people in Turkey and of Palestinians, East Timorese, Guatemalan indigenous people - the list goes on.

Myth #4.

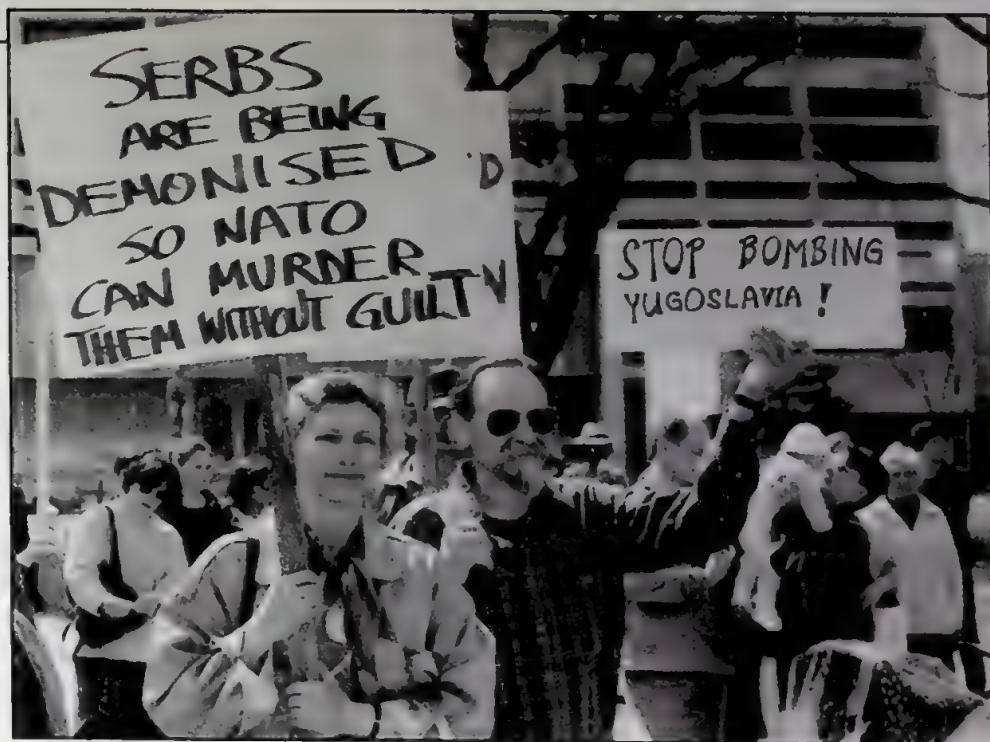
The U.S./NATO goal is to protect the rights of the predominantly Muslim Albanians in Kosovo.

Reality: U.S. officials pretend to care about the rights of Muslim people in Yugoslavia, while their policy of sanctions and war kills 300 mostly Muslim Iraqis every day - half of them are children under five years old.

The Pentagon is not a humanitarian relief agency and the corporate-owned politicians don't really care about any people: Albanians, Serbs, Kurds, Iraqis, or the poor and working people in the U.S.

This war is killing people of all nationalities in Yugoslavia, and poisoning their land with radioactive depleted uranium (DU) weapons. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, U.S. veterans and their families are suffering from Gulf War Syndrome as a result of depleted uranium poisoning. The Clinton administration and the Pentagon talk about "supporting our troops" before they go into battle, but then deny medical benefits to veterans who suffer from the after-effects of Agent Orange from Vietnam or DU from Iraq. This war will cost billions of dollars, money stolen from housing, health care, education and other social programs. Each cruise missile costs \$1 million. The only ones who will benefit from this war will be the military-industrial complex and big business.

The real U.S./NATO goal is to break Yugoslavia into ever-smaller pieces and bomb its people into submission. The Balkans is a strategic region, a crossroads between Western Europe and the oil-rich Middle East and Caspian



photos: Antoinette Martens

Basin. In only five years, the U.S. has established military domination of the former Yugoslav republics of Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia, as well as Hungary and Albania. The only hold-out has been what is today the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This is the real reason why Yugoslavia has become the target in the Balkans, just as it is the real reason that Iraq has become the target in the Persian/Arabian Gulf region.

Myth #5.

U.S. news reports are balanced and impartial, giving us the true story.

Reality: What we see today is a gross distortion of the facts. The media is dominated by big business interests, and functions as a Pentagon propaganda machine. For political purposes, the suffering of only one group, the refugees leaving Kosovo, is shown, while other Yugoslav victims of the NATO bombing are virtually ignored. The *New York Times*, CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, and others have given a very slanted view of events in Yugoslavia, to justify the massive bombing. General Electric, one of the country's largest military contractors which supplies engines for NATO jet fighters, owns NBC.

Myth #6.

The U.S. is trying to defend the rights of the people of Kosovo because they have no rights.

Reality: All minorities in Yugoslavia have much greater rights than national minorities have in the United States or in Europe. While bilingual education is under attack from



California to New York, Albanians in Kosovo have schools and tuition-free universities in the Albanian language. Medical care is free for all citizens in Yugoslavia. Albanian separatists boycotted the government school system and health care system. To refuse to use what exists is very different from being denied these rights.

The population information commonly given out is also misleading. For example, saying that 90 percent of the population is Albanian is not accurate. This figure actually includes all non-Serbs in Kosovo: Romanis, Turks, Egyptians, Goramacs (Serb Muslims from Kosovo) and others. At the Rambouillet talks, the Yugoslav delegation represented not only Serbs, but all of the nationalities in Kosovo, including two Albanians, while the Albanian separatist delegation consisted only of Albanians.

The religious differences are also exaggerated. While many Albanians are Muslim, ten percent of the Serb population is also Muslim. In addition, 25 percent of the Albanian population is Roman Catholic, such as Mother Teresa, who was a Kosovo Albanian.

Myth #7.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) is a genuine liberation army.

Reality: The KLA is a terrorist force similar to the CIA-funded Contras used by the U.S. in Nicaragua in an effort to overthrow the Sandinista government. NATO uses the KLA to justify sending U.S. troops to occupy and further break up Yugoslavia. The KLA did not exist until recently. Suddenly, it has the latest high tech weapons.

In a unanimous resolution,

the University of Regina Students' Union voted to oppose the war in Yugoslavia and condemn NATO's illegal acts of aggression. Join the campaign to end the war.

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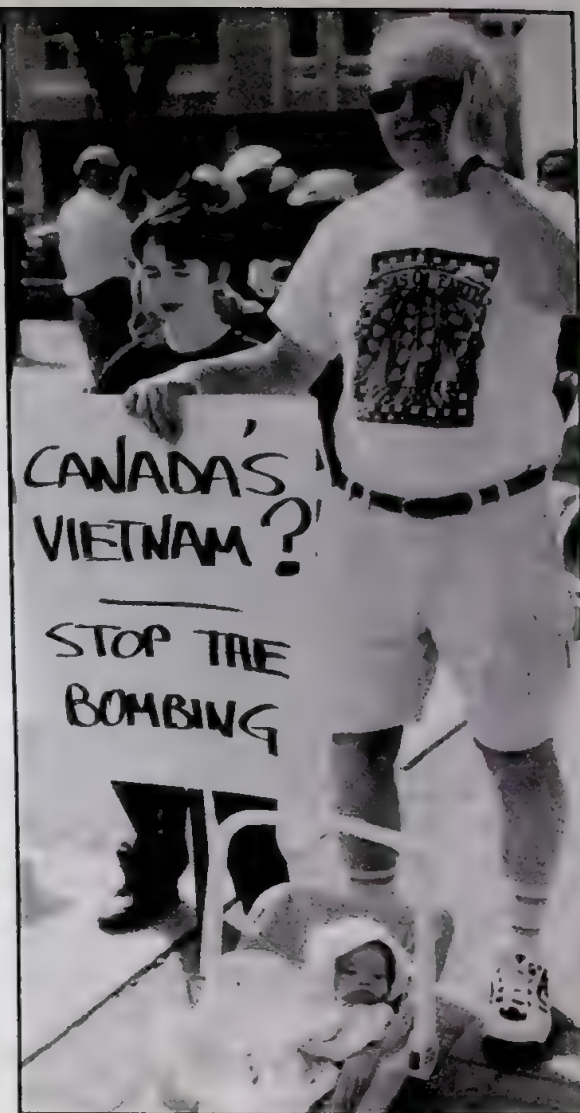
What kind of liberation struggle calls for the bombing of its own people and for a foreign army of occupation on its soil? This is the KLA demand. The Society of Albanian American Students released a call for a demonstration on March 31 "organized with the invitation of the U.S. State Department to support NATO strikes, and above all, will focus to pressure for Ground Troops in Kosova and Arms for KLA." U.S. Vice President Al Gore addressed the crowd. The signs of KLA supporters at rallies organized by the U.S. State Department - "NATO bombing, Just Do It," "KLA is NATO" - express the real relationship between the KLA and the U.S. government.

Myth #8.

The NATO bombing is not the cause of the refugee crisis.

Reality: There were no waves of refugees until the beginning of the NATO bombing on March 24. The U.S. government used similar scripts of defending civilians and stopping massacres to justify massive bombing campaigns in both the Vietnam and Iraq wars. Again and again it was the massive bombing that created refugee crises. The *London Sunday Times* interviewed refugees and found: "Nor was there much fodder for NATO propagandists among the 200 or so refugees waiting to register at a Skopje district police station early on Friday [March 26]. Mirvei, a tall Albanian woman clutching her four-month-old baby, looked bewildered when asked if Serbian troops had driven her out. 'There were no Serbs,' she said. 'We were frightened of the bombs.'"

The International Action Center was initiated in 1992 by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and many anti-war activists to expose the U.S. bombing of innocent Iraqi civilians and the massive destruction of the Iraqi infrastructure. The Center coordinated an International War Crimes Tribunal which implicated the U.S. in gross violations of international law. Since then, the IAC has been a leader in the movements to end U.S./UN sanctions against Iraq; opposed the expansion of NATO and U.S./NATO bombing of the Bosnian Serbs; end the 35-year-old blockade of Cuba; and continually opposed U.S. military involvement through-



out the globe. For more info contact: IAC, #206-39 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011. Phone (212)633-6646. Fax (212) 633-2889. www.iacenter.org E-mail: iacenter@iacenter.org

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Crime of the Century

The CIA: Cocaine International Agency.

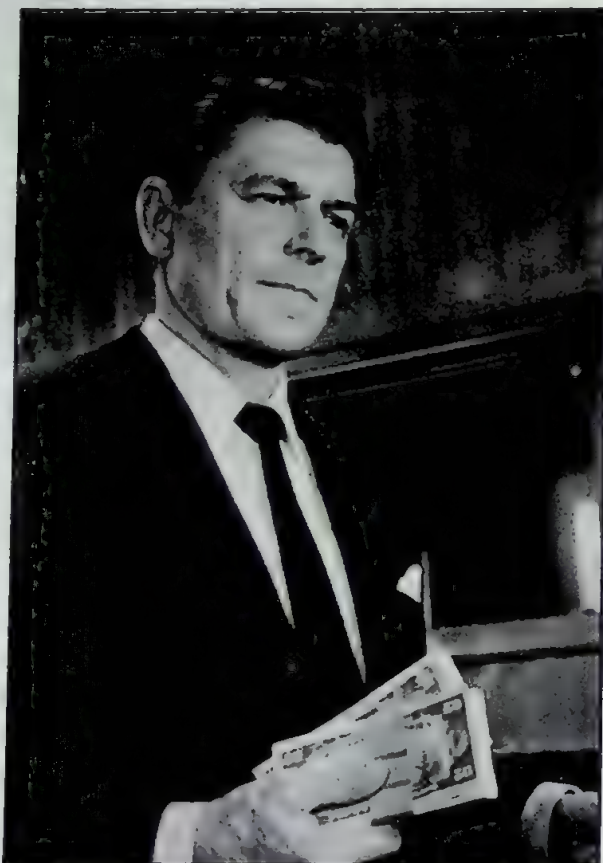
by Asad Ismi

[It is an] issue that feels like a dagger in the heart of African-Americans... Any evidence that [the CIA] supported drug trafficking would indeed be the crime of the century."

- USA Today

In a historic report released in October 1998, the CIA's Inspector General (IG) Frederick Hitz confirmed long-standing allegations that the Agency facilitated drug trafficking by the Contras during the 1980s. The CIA-created Contra army fought against the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua from 1981 to 1990 in a war that killed 40,000 Nicaraguans. The Contras were notorious for targeting civilians, schools and medical centres. Hitz listed 50 Contras involved in the drug trade including some of its top leaders and admitted that the CIA placed drug traffickers in command positions in the Contra army. The Agency had extensive knowledge of Contra drug trafficking and protected it by failing to act against the traffickers, withholding evidence and misleading investigators. The Reagan administration provided similar "protection" and the report shows that drug trafficking and money laundering went up to Reagan's National Security Council (NSC), where Lt. Col. Oliver North was in charge of Contra matters.

Hitz's report marks the CIA's first admission about alliances with drug traffickers, an alliance it has maintained since 1943 when the Agency was known as the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). This long and sordid history involves CIA collaboration with heroin exporters in Sicily, France, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Afghanistan and Pakistan



as well as with cocaine-dealing Cuban exiles in Miami. In Laos, CIA planes ferried heroin which addicted thousands of U.S. soldiers fighting in Vietnam.

The Inspector General's report was issued in response to Gary Webb's series of articles in the *San José Mercury News* entitled "Dark Alliance" which appeared in August 1996 and linked drug smuggling by the Contras to the crack cocaine explosion in Los Angeles during the 1980s. Webb was forced to resign from his job at the *Mercury News* due to a campaign of vilification unleashed against him by the *New York*

Times, *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*, but the storm of controversy generated by his series forced the CIA to issue the report. The IG report vindicates Webb and is far more damning to the CIA than Webb's series.

According to Hitz, the CIA knew about Contra drug running from the start. A September 1981 CIA cable stated that ADREN (the earliest Contra force) had decided to use drug trafficking as a "financing mechanism." The cable adds that in July 1981, two ADREN members made the first delivery of drugs to Miami. A few months after discovering that ADREN was smuggling drugs into the U.S., the CIA made one of ADREN's leaders, Enrique Bermúdez, commander of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), the main Contra army which was organized by the Agency. In 1982, Bermúdez enlisted Norwin Meneses, a major Nicaraguan cocaine trafficker, to raise money for the Contras. Meneses and Danilo Blandon, another Nicaraguan trafficker, then began selling tons of cocaine to black street gangs in Los Angeles (with millions of dollars in proceeds

going to the Contras), helping touch off the crack explosion in the U.S. A 1988 FBI cable identifies Meneses as working for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The FBI also believed that Meneses "was and may still be an informant for the CIA." At the time, the FBI was unsuccessfully trying to indict Meneses on federal cocaine trafficking charges. The Meneses-Blandon drug ring was concentrated in California but also sold cocaine in Oregon, Washington and Texas.

Aware of early Contra drug trafficking, the CIA proceeded to make this criminal activity as easy as it could for its proxy army. According to Hitz, in 1982 the Agency signed a secret agreement (which lasted until 1995) with the U.S. Justice Department exempting the CIA from any requirement to report on allegations of drug trafficking by "non-employees" of the Agency which included agents, assets and non-staff employees. Thus for 14 years, while the Contras brought tons of cocaine into the U.S., the CIA and the Justice Department looked the other way. The FBI, DEA and the Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency were also part of this connivance.

With the Contras' growing involvement in drug dealing, the CIA chose "Ivan Gomez" (a CIA pseudonym), an experienced drug trafficker, to supervise Contra operations on the Southern Front in Costa Rica. Gomez admitted to the Agency in 1982 that he had assisted members of his family who were selling drugs and laundering money. Gomez stated that he helped his brother and brother-in-law move cash from New York City to Miami where they ran a money laundering centre for drug traffickers. In June 1982, Gomez's brother was arrested on drug charges and in September, Gomez commenced work at his CIA job in Costa Rica. According to Carlos Cabezas, a convicted drug trafficker, Gomez was the CIA agent in Costa Rica in charge of drug money going to the Contras. Gomez was to ensure that the money was given to the Contras and that nobody took an unauthorized profit. He remained the CIA's man in Costa Rica until 1988.

Adding to Gomez's narcotics experience, the CIA appointed another drug trafficker, Cuban-American Felipe Vidal, logistics coordinator for the Contras. Vidal had a criminal record for drug dealing in the 1970s and in January 1986, the DEA in Miami found 414 pounds of cocaine

hidden in a yucca shipment going from a Contra operative in Costa Rica to Ocean Hunter (a drug-connected seafood importing company) where Vidal worked. In 1987, the U.S.

Attorney in Miami requested documents from the CIA about "Contra-related activities" by Vidal, Ocean Hunter and 16 other entities. The Agency replied that "no information had been found regarding Ocean Hunter," a false statement. Vidal continued in his CIA position until 1990.

Other Contra leaders with drug connections included Juan Rivas, the FDN chief of staff who admitted to cocaine dealing in Colombia before the war. Rivas told the CIA that he had been arrested and convicted of transporting cocaine in Barranquilla, Colombia. He escaped from prison and came to Central America where he joined the Contras. In February 1989, the CIA asked the DEA not to act against Rivas "in view of the serious political damage to the U.S. government that could occur should the information about Rivas become public." According to the FBI,

Arnoldo José "Frank" Arana, the Contras' main spokesman in Honduras, was involved in drug smuggling.

The Inspector General's report also links the top leadership of the U.S. government to drug trafficking. In March 1987, the CIA questioned Moises Nuñez, a Cuban-American who worked for Oliver North's Contra operation centred in Reagan's NSC, about drug allegations. Nuñez replied that since 1985, he had a "clandestine relationship" with the NSC and that because of the specific tasks he had performed at the direction of the NSC, it was difficult to answer questions relating to his involvement in narcotics trafficking. The CIA responded by ending the investigation. Alan Fiers, head of the Agency's Central American Task Force, explained that the Nuñez matter was not pursued "because of the NSC connection and the possibility that this could be somehow connected to the Private Benefactor Program" [the Contra money handled by North]. North's notes for July 12, 1985 include a statement from a CIA officer in the field: "14M [million] to finance came from drugs."

Hitz's report also implicates airlines ferrying supplies for the Contras in drug dealing. These include SETCO, and Southern Air Transport (SAT). SETCO was owned by Juan Matta Ballesteros, who has been called "Honduras"

**"I've known what
was going on
there..."**

**I was very
definitely involved
in the decisions
about support to
the freedom
fighters.**

**It was my idea to
begin with."**

**Ronald Reagan
May 15, 1987**

biggest drug trafficker." According to a 1983 U.S. Customs report, Ballesteros was smuggling narcotics into the U.S. The CIA-contracted SAT (it was formerly owned by the CIA) was the main airline for Oliver North's Iran-Contra activities. In February 1991, the DEA informed the CIA about SAT's "alleged involvement in cocaine trafficking... from 1985 to 1990." Mike Holms, who worked for the DEA in Miami, received regular reports from his informants dur-

ing the 1980s that SAT was landing plane loads of cocaine at Homestead air force base nearby. When Holms informed his superiors of this he was told to "stand down because of national security."

It is clear from the Inspector General's report that (as a Contra leader told the DEA in 1985) "the CIA was allowing the Contras to fly drugs into the U.S., sell them and keep the proceeds." The report shows that CIA-approved drug trafficking was integral to the Contra effort and that the Agency made sure it remained so. The U.S. government thus self-admittedly allowed plane loads of cocaine into the country while fighting the "War on Drugs" by giving 40-year sentences to thousands of mostly poor black young men for selling or possessing ounces of the same drug. The lives of thousands of African-Americans were destroyed (through incarceration, drug use or related violence) in order to finance the killing of 40,000 Nicaraguans (most of them poor peasants) whose revolution had dared to overthrow the vicious four-decade long U.S.-imposed Somoza dictatorship. Washington's responsibility for Third World genocide is well documented. The IG report officially confirms for the first time that for U.S. decision makers, the domestic population is dispensable too.

Given the CIA's admission to the "crime of the century," who in the U.S. government gets punished for it? No one. As president, George Bush pardoned CIA and administration officials implicated in Iran-Contra crimes, so no action can be taken against him, Reagan and North. After all, they are just three in a long line of murderers and drug traffickers who have ruled the United States.

Mexico

Related revelations show that the CIA's destructiveness was not limited to U.S. and Nicaraguan civilians. According to Hector Berrellez, a 24-year-old veteran of the DEA and its most decorated agent who retired with honours in September 1996, DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena was murdered in Mexico by drug traffickers linked to the CIA. Camarena was kidnapped in broad daylight from in front of the U.S. consulate in Guadalajara in February 1985. His tortured body was discovered a month later. The investigation into Camarena's murder was the most significant in DEA history and Berrellez was put in charge of the investigation in 1989. He discovered that the Mexican secret police was protecting large marijuana plantations

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in Sinaloa and that Camarena had got the Mexican Federal Judicial Police to close one of these ranches. The "busted" plantation was owned by a Mexican drug trafficker who had an agreement with the CIA to protect his operations in exchange for providing the Contras with money, weapons and training bases. When Camarena came upon the ranch, there was a possibility that he would uncover the alliance between the CIA and the Mexican drug traffickers. For this reason, Camarena was killed, according to Berrellez. Berrellez cites the audio tapes (obtained by him) that the traffickers made while they were torturing Camarena. On the tapes, the drug dealers repeatedly ask Camarena, "What do you know about the CIA?"

What do you know about the CIA's involvement with the plantation?"

Berrellez recommended to his superiors that the DEA impanel a federal grand jury to investigate the CIA's role in Camarena's murder and the Agency's drug connections. A grand jury was set up and called a few witnesses before Berrellez was suddenly transferred to Washington in 1995 and given a desk job with nothing to do. The investigation went nowhere and Berrellez retired in 1996. Berrellez's account was corroborated by Lawrence Victor Harrison, a CIA operative in Mexico. Harrison told the DEA that the CIA had Camarena killed. Harrison had worked for the CIA in Mexico for many years and told a convincing story. The judge, however, did not allow the jury to hear Harrison's account and removed it from the record. One of Berrellez's informants told him that Rafael Caro Quintero, the man finally jailed for Camarena's murder, was getting guns through CIA connections. Juan Matta Ballasteros, owner of SETCO, was also a member of the gang involved in Camarena's murder.

While stationed in Mexico, Berrellez received constant reports from his army of two to three hundred informants about "strange fortified bases" at Sinaloa, Baja, Veracruz, Durango and all over the country which were not Mexican military bases. U.S. military planes would land at these bases and according to the informants, the planes were shipping drugs. When Berrellez reported this to his DEA superiors and to U.S. Embassy staff in Mexico City, he was told, "Stay away from those bases. They are training camps, special operations." During the 1980s, Berrellez's \$3 million informant budget brought in report after report of CIA-leased planes flying cocaine into Homestead air force base in Florida, and an airfield near Tucson, Arizona believed to be a CIA base. The planes flew guns south. One informant told Berrellez about flying in a U.S. military plane full of drugs from Guadalajara to Homestead. Everywhere

Berrellez turned he encountered drug traffickers with CIA connections. Given such evidence, Berrellez believes that the CIA is in the drug business and that the Agency ran camps for the Contras in Mexico "with big planes flying in and out full of dope." He also believes that some of his fellow agents were members of the CIA and that the DEA was "penetrated."

Mena

Contra drug operations were not restricted to the U.S. west coast. An east coast Contra drug pipeline went through Intermountain Regional Airport in Mena, Arkansas where one of the world's largest drug operations was based during the 1980s. From

1981 to 1986, a fleet of planes flew to and from this rural isolated area in the mountains of western Arkansas at all hours of the night. The operation was run by Barry Seal, one of the biggest cocaine and marijuana importers in the southern U.S. Seal, who was also a DEA and CIA informant, smuggled between \$3 billion and \$5 billion worth of drugs into the U.S. He took guns to the Contras in Central America for the CIA and brought back cocaine for the Medellin cartel which he would airdrop in Louisiana, Texas, Florida and Arkansas. Seal admitted that he was the Medellin cartel's main link to the cocaine markets of the southeastern U.S. The drugs would also be sold in New York, Chicago and Detroit. Along with the CIA and DEA, the FBI, the IRS, the Louisiana State Police and the Arkansas State Police were also aware of Seal's trafficking.

The governor of Arkansas at that time was Bill Clinton, who blocked two local attempts to investigate events at Mena. One of Clinton's biggest campaign contributors and political supporters was Dan Lasater, a prominent bond broker in Little Rock, Arkansas, who operated several investment firms and brokerages in Arkansas and Florida. According to the FBI, Lasater was part of "a huge drug ring" and the main supplier of cocaine to "the investment and bond community in the Little Rock area which has the largest bond community in the U.S. outside of New York City." Lasater was convicted of cocaine trafficking in 1986 but served only six months in jail. Bill Clinton pardoned him in 1990. Roger Clinton, the president's brother and a cocaine addict, was an unindicted co-conspirator in Lasater's drug ring. According to former Arkansas State Trooper L.D. Brown, who was part of Clinton's security detail, when he told the governor about Seal's cocaine flights, Clinton replied, "That's Lasater's deal."

Asad Ismi is author of Profits of Repression: Canadian Investment in and Trade with Colombia (A CAW Report).

**"The CIA
knew about
Contra drug
running from
the start."**

Whispers from the Qu'Appelle

Whispers from the Qu'Appelle
A CD by Moral Panic
358 Halifax St.,
Regina, SK S4R 1T2
1998,
\$10.00
(includes postage & handling).

reviewed by Victor Lau

I'm no music critic and have little experience in the punk music scene. This might have been detrimental to my reviewing Moral Panic's latest CD, but it's not. As with most people who have an open mind towards all music from different areas, I found the CD to be quite enjoyable on several different levels.

The CD begins with a message from the Communist movement. In answering the question, "I thought you sold out?", the Communists state, "That's what we wanted you to think." It's a good start towards a revolutionary critique of the current capitalist paradigm and is in keeping with the title of the CD, *Whispers from the Qu'Appelle*. The listener is led to believe that the music is not revolutionary and is quiet and controlled; nothing could be further from the experience I got from listening to their music.

Their first song, "Trynottothink" has a lot of raw energy. It gets you wanting to do something. Anything to release and join in with their energy. Great drumming. The second song is more like regular punk and very short. The third song has a hard edge to it, low rhythm, and still very fast and short. The fourth song, "Dead Labour,"

brought the image into my mind of the old dying British Labour Party or the death of the old-style New Labour leadership (which is not very revolutionary and is more into accommodating capital, not abolishing it). Perhaps this song is referring to the death of labour support for the NDP. Regardless, after a momentary pause, the song concludes

There are plenty of other great songs that are a little different from regular punk. It's more like a slower rhythm, low bass, easier flow, and clearer lyrics. I especially like being able to hear the lyrics because they are so important to the message. The listener is allowed to question and given room and space to breathe and think.

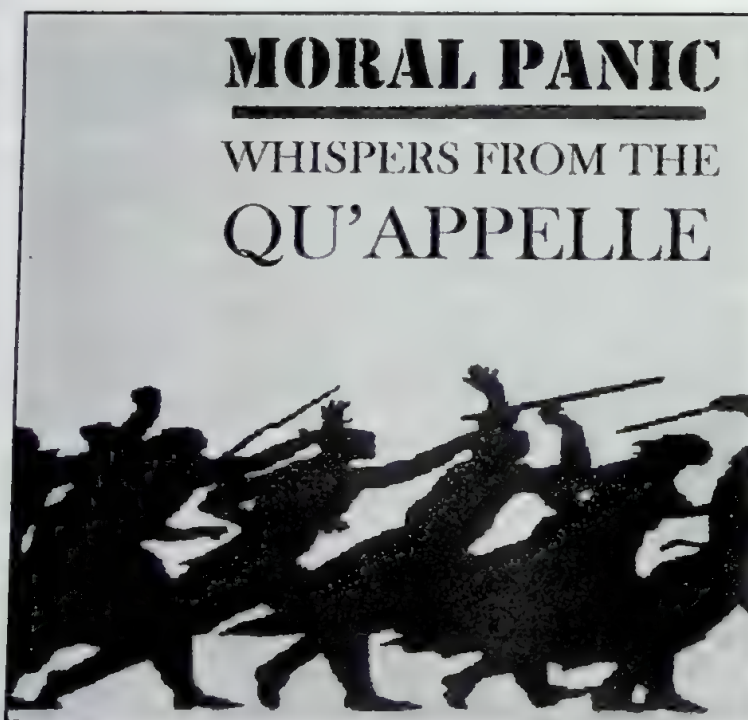
The songs still hit you like slow-moving bullets, but the pauses and empty spaces allow for the sound between the notes.

If there is any criticism, it would be that some of the other songs tend to fall under the dismal description of "Happy New Year." This song was too short (15 seconds) and too fast (can a punk song be too fast?), therefore the message was lost. I think that as this band matures and begins to feel more comfortable with their style, they will be truly astounding. I urge all progressive people to support

Moral Panic by buying the CD. If not for the bonus songs, the interesting Michael Parenti lectures, or even the hilarious definition of the word "fuck" and its varied uses in our common English language, then buy it to support the ongoing revolution.

As Michael Parenti says, "The pure socialists support every revolution, except the ones that succeed." Lead singer Colin Hall and Moral Panic certainly succeeded on this CD. Don't be left out of the revolution.

Victor Lau is the New Green Alliance candidate in Regina Dewdney.



with the feeling that whatever the message, it's still dead.

The next song, "One Solution - Revolution" begins with a short speech from well-known leftist historian Michael Parenti about how communism brought about better living conditions to millions of people. I love this song. It starts the music with a high-pitched whistle that could be a rallying call for all of us. And even though the song's lyrics are only three words, the song itself is clear and simple with its powerful message. If you are going to head-bang to any song from this CD, this is it.



FIDEL'S NEXT JOB?

"If [Baltimore Orioles manager Ray] Miller's days are numbered, the next choice as Orioles manager is obvious. This team deserves Fidel Castro... He knows baseball. He's a leader. And, as for dealing sternly with the idle rich, he already knows how to confiscate private property."

- Thomas Boswell,
sports writer for the Washington Post. Cuba's all-star baseball team defeated Baltimore 12-6 on May 3. Baltimore's payroll: US\$78 million. Cuba's payroll: about US\$2,250.

BANANA BRAIN

"Canada is far from democratic, witness two generations of politicians from the three mainstream parties and a fascist, Quebec separatist party that devises ways to keep voters in the dark. Those who would enlighten the public face jail sentences. Canada is becoming a banana republic without the bananas."

- Diane Francis,
National Post, April 15, 1999.

GET IT RIGHT, CONRAD

"With no hills to hide behind, history is never far out of view in Saskatchewan. Thus Premier Roy Romanow's decision to order 8,400 striking nurses back to work, a move they have defied for six days now, takes on extra significance given that a provincial election is expected this summer. In 1982 former-premier Allan Blakeney presided over the decade-long collapse of the Saskatchewan New Democrats in similar fashion. Mr. Blakeney ordered striking health-care workers back to work prior to an election, alienating the NDP from their urban union strength, and Gary Filmon's Progressive Conservatives romped to victory."

- lead editorial,
National Post, April 14, 1999. (The Blakeney government was replaced by Grant Devine. Gary Filmon is the present Tory Premier of Manitoba.)

Say What??

DO AS I SAY...

"We know that we must do more to reach out to our children and teach them to express their anger and resolve their conflicts with words, not weapons."

- Bill Clinton,
U.S. President, responding to the tragedy at
Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.
What about Kosovo?



NOT CENSORSHIP?

"It was not a censorship issue."

- Lauren Stover,
Miami airport spokesperson, claiming that the airport's decision to ban the latest issue of Cigar Aficionado from the airport's newsstands was because the issue contained material "flattering" to the Cuban government. Airport officials later lifted the ban.

MR. MEAN

"People have suggested a tour of five or six members of the NDP caucus with a reckless driver. I don't know, that may work."

- Gordon Campbell,
B.C. Liberal Opposition leader, in response to a question at a Vancouver Board of Trade luncheon about how to get rid of the current B.C. NDP government.

Say "No" to Globalization

by Guy Marsden

Every day politicians and media pundits bombard us with the notion that globalization is inevitable. Yet two recent events have proven that citizens working collectively can indeed resist globalization and all that it entails.

First, a well-coordinated campaign by global grassroots activists scuttled the Multilateral Agreement on Investment at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in the fall of 1998.

More recently, in March, the House of Commons approved by a two-thirds majority private members motion M-239 which calls on the government to "enact a tax on financial transactions in concert with the international community." The motion, sponsored by NDP MP Lorne Nystrom and supported by members from every political party, makes Canada the first country in the world to declare its intention to control speculative capital.

And just how big of a problem is currency speculation?

In 1975, approximately 80 percent of foreign exchange transactions occurred to facilitate business in the real economy, such as changing currencies to import or export products or to build factories. The remaining 20% of transactions were for speculative purposes, such as buying and selling currencies to make profits on changing values.

Today, \$2 trillion is exchanged on world currency markets every day, the equivalent of the annual gross domestic product of the United States. A whopping 97 percent of these transactions occur for speculation.

In effect, a relatively stable, post-war financial system has been transformed into a global casino where money traders hedge their bets on marginal currency fluctuations.

This rampant currency speculation has contributed to the collapse of currencies in Mexico, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Russia and Brazil, resulting in skyrocketing prices, business closures, soaring unemployment and plummeting real incomes.

Advanced industrialized countries like Canada have seen Asian export markets collapse and are forever hesitant to pursue expansionary economic policies or boost social spending for fear of precipitating a flight of capital.

In the 1970s Nobel-prize winning economist James Tobin proposed a tax to throw some "grains of sand" into the cogs of short-term currency speculation in order to encourage longer-term productive investment.

Essentially, a Tobin tax would impose a small levy of between 0.1 percent and 0.25 percent on each currency transaction. The tax would discourage short-term investments in search of the highest rate of return, while leaving long-term foreign investments and one-time purchases of foreign goods largely unaffected.

The Tobin tax would give governments more autonomy to set fiscal and monetary policies by making possible greater differences between short-term interest rates in different currencies. It would reduce the volatility of exchange rate fluctuations for exporters, importers and long-term investors, and would raise annual revenues of US\$150 to \$300 billion which could be used for international development.

"The success of the Tobin motion campaign, along with last year's MAI victory, provides ample evidence that citizens working together can take on economic globalization," says Robin Round of the Halifax Initiative, which coordinated nation-wide support for M-239.



However, those who support the idea of a Tobin tax still have their work cut out for them. The private members motion is not binding on the federal government. Moreover, although Finance Minister Paul Martin voted in favour of the motion, he was quick to dismiss the idea of a Tobin tax as impractical and reiterated his commitment to the "sound macroeconomic policies" of open and flexible exchange rates, low inflation, and zero deficits.

Nonetheless, the passage of M-239 is an important victory and can be used for further organizing. The Halifax Initiative is pursuing links with like-minded citizens groups across the world and is urging supporters of the Tobin tax to write to the Finance Minister and their MPs to ask what they will do next to act on the House of Commons mandate.

Admittedly, the implementation of a Tobin tax will not solve all the problems of today's global capitalist economy, but it would represent an important step towards regaining some democratic control over financial markets.

Guy Marsden is an activist with the Council of Canadians.

My Opinion does not necessarily represent the editorial views of Briarpatch. We welcome submissions and encourage any ensuing dialogue.

IT'S PAYBACK TIME

Less than 30% of Saskatchewan's unemployed qualify for UI benefits due to "reforms" by the Chretien government. The rate continues to drop.

Instead of helping the unemployed, the Liberal government has helped itself to the \$20 billion surplus in the UI fund.

Finance Minister Martin's right hand man (the guy with the pot of money pictured here) is on the Saskatchewan tour to thank folks for their UI contributions. That's because the fund is entirely financed by working people and employers through premiums. The government hasn't paid a dime since 1990.

Working people and the unemployed are demanding major changes to the UI program. We want the \$20 billion repaid, we want UI benefits restored and we want an independent UI Commission created.

The UI account is a trust fund, not a slush fund.



To join our UI campaign, call the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour at 525-0197.

What the corporations will be buying today.



Our hospitals



Our schools



Our water supply



Our roads

They're on a shopping spree. Snapping up the public services that make our communities work. And while corporations make a tidy profit, we pay the price — lower quality, reduced safety, restricted access and loss of control.

It's time to stop the selloff.

Check www.cupe.ca to get the facts on privatization. Find out why Public Works!

Public!
WORKS!



Canadian Union of Public Employees

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